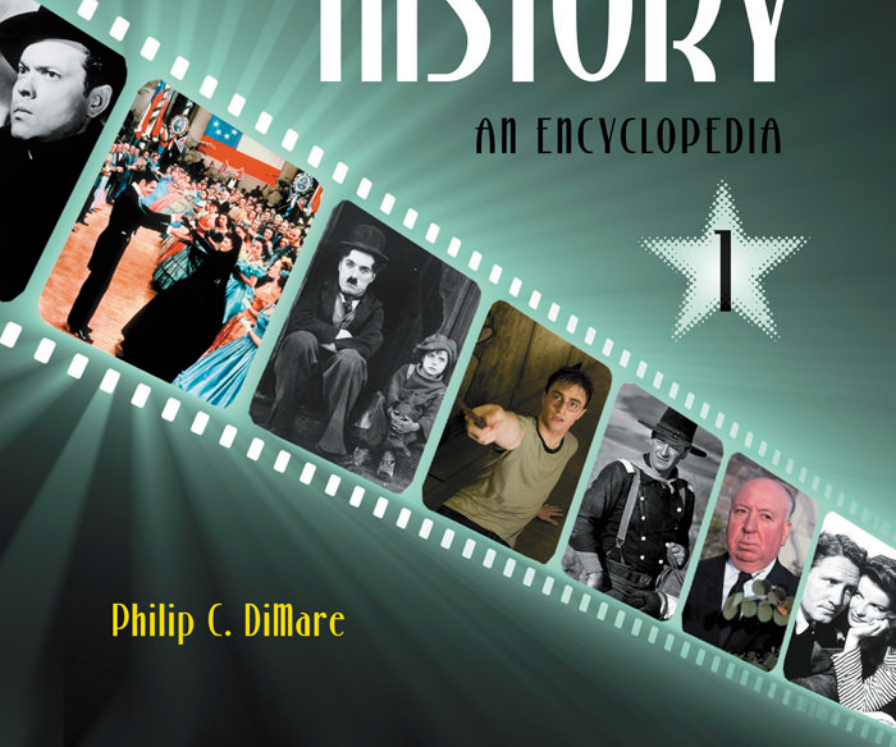


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MOVIES in AMERICAN HISTORY

AN ENCYCLOPEDIA



Philip C. DiMare

MOVIES IN AMERICAN HISTORY

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MOVIES IN AMERICAN HISTORY

AN ENCYCLOPEDIA
Volume 1

Philip C. DiMare, Editor



Santa Barbara, California • Denver, Colorado • Oxford, England

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Perhaps the part of the editorial process that is least noted when a book is published is that of copy editing. Copy editors have the often tedious task of insuring that the technical aspects of a project—the spelling, grammar, style, and attributions—are all

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INTRODUCTION

Philip C. DiMare

The second half of the nineteenth century was marked by the explosive growth of American industry, with the railroad leading the way in defining how this industrial process would unfold. As rail systems flourished after the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869—their development eagerly supported by local, state, and federal governments that provided monies and land grants; and aided by technological advancements, such as steel rails that could carry heavier locomotives, and new couplers, braking systems, and signals—these systems became foundational elements in growing America’s market economy. Literally connecting the nation’s sprawling territories, railroads employed thousands of workers and created large-scale industrial bureaucracies to manage their operations. They also defined the business model that would be adopted by leaders of other important U.S. industries, such as steel and iron, petroleum, electricity, mass-produced foods and clothing, and farm machinery (Heilbroner and Singer, 1999).

The first great American industrialists, shrewd and often ruthless men like Jay Gould, Cornelius Vanderbilt, J. P. Morgan, Andrew Carnegie, and John D. Rockefeller dominated the late nineteenth-century business world. Employing the processes of “vertical” and “horizontal” integration, which allowed owners to control all aspects of specific industries and to drive competitors out of those particular markets, these early industrialists, often referred to as “robber barons” by their critics, created monopolistic mega companies such as U.S. Steel and Standard Oil. Forming themselves into large and powerful business “trusts,” which gave a limited number of trustees dictatorial control over extensive, interconnected corporate networks, these business leaders drove industrialization in America during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, until, by the 1910s, American industrial production would comprise one-third of the world’s total output (Morris, 2006).

Industrialization and the Rise of American Cinema

Significantly, America's entry into world cinema was intimately connected to the industrial expansion that occurred during the second half of the nineteenth century and to the extraordinarily gifted inventors it spawned. Thomas Alva Edison (**see: Edison, Thomas Alva**) for instance, who had invented the phonograph in 1876, was instrumental in driving the development of the film industry in the United States during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Edison was intrigued by reports that Eadweard Muybridge (**see: Muybridge, Eadweard**) had invented a machine called the "zoopraxiscope," which could project moving images onto a screen. In early 1888, Muybridge literally took his show on the road, touring the United States and screening his short motion picture *Animal Locomotion* for amazed viewers. When the Muybridge tour stopped over in Orange, New Jersey, in February of that year, Edison invited Muybridge to visit his lab in West Orange. Impressed by Muybridge's zoopraxiscope, Edison suggested that the two become partners. (Although Edison denied it in his journals, the story still circulates that during their meeting, Edison pitched the idea to Muybridge of joining together his phonograph and the zoopraxiscope in order to create motion pictures with sound!) Although they were interested in each other's ideas, the partnership was never formed, and the two inventors went their separate ways. Still fascinated by the zoopraxiscope, Edison took the technology Muybridge had utilized to develop his invention and fashioned a more efficient projector, which came to be called the Kinetoscope. Sadly for Muybridge, after Edison filed patents for the kinetograph (the camera) and the kinetoscope (the viewing implement) in 1891, Muybridge and his contributions were all but forgotten (Sklar, 2002).

Edison debuted his Kinetoscope at the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences in 1893. Customers were able to step up to his moving-picture machine and view short film clips such as the "Blacksmith Scene," which ran for 20 seconds and showed three of Edison's employees hammering on an anvil. What was considered Edison's first "film" bore the rather cumbersome title *Edison's Kinetoscopic Record of a Sneeze*. Also known as *Fred Ott's Sneeze*, the short film captured the eponymously named Edison employee in the midst of sneezing. Other Edison films followed—*American Gymnast*, for example, which showed a young woman performing a somersault, and *The Barber Shop*, which recorded the everyday activities of barbers as they serviced their clients (Sklar, 2002).

In regard to their format, all of Edison's early motion pictures were the same: they were simply descriptive recordings of some sort of action, what came to be called "actualities." Edison did expand on this notion of descriptive recording, presenting audiences with two filmic series that possessed more entertainment value. The first of these displayed the European muscleman Eugene Sandow set against a black backdrop and moving through a number of different poses in order to show off his remarkable physique. The other series featured a dancer named Annabelle Whitford, who, like Sandow, was positioned in front of a black backdrop. For her part, Whitford danced for her audiences in short films such as *Annabelle Serpentine Dance* and *Annabelle Butterfly Dance*. Edison even made the first picture that shocked viewers. Titled *The*

Kiss, the film depicted a rather awkward kiss between two stage actors, May Irwin and John Rice. The first cinema “still” of a motion picture image—the actors poised with lips together—was drawn from Edison’s film, appearing in an American newspaper and raising even more eyebrows. In the end, *The Kiss* elicited the first calls for censorship of the radical new medium (Lewis, 2008).

Edison had neglected to secure international patents for his kinetoscope, and inventors in Europe began to develop their own motion picture projectors. Two of the most talented of these European inventors were the French-born brothers Auguste and Louis Lumière (**see: Lumière Brothers, The**). Familiar with, and inspired by, Edison’s kinetoscope, the Lumières created a complex machine that was camera, projector, and film developer rolled into one. Much more practical than Edison’s machine, the Lumières’ *cinématographe* ran at 16 fps (frames-per-second), which became the standard for silent pictures. It also allowed images to be taken “out of the box,” as it were, and to be projected on a screen so that they could be viewed by multi-member audiences.

Toward that end, the Lumières rented out the basement of the Grand Café in Paris on December 28, 1895, and the brothers became the first filmmakers to screen their cinematic offerings for a paying audience when they exhibited a series of motion picture shorts. They opened their 1895 screening with a picture titled *La sortie des usines Lumière* (*Leaving the Lumière Factory*). In a certain sense the picture was much like those produced by Edison, as it merely recorded workers leaving a factory in Lyon after a long day of work. Yet *La sortie des usines* had a very different feel to it, as the filmmakers had staged the scene—by the use of special lighting, camera position, and theatrical blocking—in a way that gave it a certain expressive depth. Other films followed that had the same depth-level quality, perhaps the most famous the startling *L’arrivée d’un train en gare à la Ciotat* (*The Arrival of a Train at la Ciotat*), which legend has it had viewers covering their eyes and turning away from the screen for fear that the train would land in their laps.

The Creation of Narrative Films and the Spread of Early Movie Houses

Unlike Edison, then, the Lumières by way of their use of innovative filmmaking techniques, began to define what came to be known as the cinematic *mise-en-scène*. Borrowed from the stage, the phrase, which may be translated as “putting on the scene,” defines the process by which the film set (much like the theatrical stage) is framed—how it is lit, where the camera is placed, where the actors are positioned. Rather than just recording action, then, filmmakers began to “put on scenes” that conveyed meaning to their viewers. Ironically, the first filmmaker who began to make a name for himself as a master of *mise-en-scène* in America was another Frenchman, Georges Méliès (**see: Méliès, Georges**). Méliès was a magician who had experimented with trick photography and what would come to be understood as special effects. Although like other filmmakers he had begun his cinematic career by making actualities, he eventually began to make motion pictures that told stories—*Barbe-Bleue* (*Bluebeard*) in 1902, for instance, and later, *La sirène* (*The Mermaid*) in 1904 and *Le diable noir* (*The Black Imp*) in 1905.

Certainly his most famous offering, though, was *Le voyage dans la lune* (*A Trip to the Moon*), which was released in 1902. Although like almost all the films of the day, *Le voyage dans la lune* was shot as if the viewer were looking at a theatrical stage, Méliès used what would now be considered crude special effects—such as making moon men disappear in clouds of smoke and shifting scenery around the set in unexpected ways—that gave his motion picture a narrative quality that actualities did not possess.

The possibility of screening narrative motion pictures such as Méliès's *Le voyage dans la lune* for ever-larger audiences was facilitated by Edison's development of the Vitascope during the mid-1890s. Dubbed by some Edison's "Greatest Marvel," the Vitascope was instrumental in attracting increasingly larger audiences to film-viewing venues. Individual viewers had initially watched moving pictures in film houses such as the Holland Brothers' Kinetoscope Parlor. For a small fee, customers were entitled to view the filmic fare that flickered to life on five separate machines, an experience they thought well worth the price. Kinetoscope parlors quickly became wildly popular, springing up in cities across the country. Eventually, though, film shorts began to be screened for multiple-member audiences who were attending vaudeville shows, the most popular form of entertainment during the late nineteenth century. When vaudeville performers went on strike in 1900, theater owners wagered that audiences were so enthralled by motion pictures that they would not care if the live acts were dropped and they were presented with "all-film" shows. Much to the delight of the owners their wager paid off, as audiences flocked to theaters to see these all-film programs.

By the early twentieth century, the popularity of motion pictures gave rise to the creation of nickelodeons (**see: Nickelodeon Era, The**), movie houses that got their name as a result of owners charging customers a nickel to view a program of film shorts. By 1908, New York City could boast that 600 nickelodeons had opened there, and other large cities also saw the growth of this cinematic craze. Nickelodeons were not exclusively urban phenomena, however, as these early film venues spread to rural areas, as well—indeed, by 1910, nickelodeons were even popular in Oklahoma, which at that time was still considered "Indian Territory."

Filmmaking Becomes a Business

The five-cent charge for entry into a nickelodeon made these public spaces available to thousands of immigrants who made their way to America during the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth. Largely illiterate and initially unable to speak English, these immigrants, especially those from different countries in Europe who settled in East Coast urban centers such as New York City, became part of a lower- and middle-class consumer culture that began to dominate America's increasingly industrialized and urbanized twentieth-century landscape. Capitalizing on the creation of this rapidly emerging consumer culture, investors with money and vision began to provide competition for Edison. One of his former employees, W. K. L. Dickson, for instance, helped found the American Mutoscope and Biograph Company, which ultimately came to be called simply Biograph. Working with a 70mm film format, which provided audiences not only with much larger

but also much clearer images, Biograph became a force in the burgeoning film industry. Its founders, especially Dickson, were fascinated by the new medium and sought to advance it technologically. Toward this end, they developed innovative equipment such as a panning-head tripod that allowed the camera to swivel, at least in a basic way, from side to side. The possibility of even rudimentary camera movement represented a vastly important step forward in the evolution of moving pictures: Instead of being limited to viewing simple action sequences from a single perspective, audiences were now treated to screen images that seemed increasingly lifelike.

Biograph did not break completely from its predecessors, churning out its own list of actualities; yet, by 1900, they were already making what can be considered early narrative films. Largely cautionary tales concerning the evils of alcohol, infidelity, and prostitution, they bore titles such as *The Downward Path*, *She Ran Away with a City Man*, and *The Girl Who Went Astray*. The company also produced a series of shorts that provided viewers with troubling racist messages. Three of these films—*Dancing Darkies*, *A Watermelon Feast*, and *A Hard Wash*, the last depicting an African American woman desperately scrubbing her child in order, audiences were left to infer, to wash away the child's "blackness"—appeared in 1896, the same year that the U.S. Supreme Court handed down its disturbing *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision that ushered in the Jim Crow era of a "separate but equal" America (Lewis, 2008).

Edison fought back against Biograph by piecing together his own mega firm in 1908, the Motion Picture Patents Company (MPPC). A powerful corporate trust in the manner of John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil and J. P. Morgan's U.S. Steel, Edison's MPPC joined together nine of his competitors—including Biograph. Like Rockefeller and Morgan, who used the business practices of horizontal and vertical integration to gobble up smaller companies and to dominate every aspect of their respective industries, the MPPC overwhelmed the film industry during the first decade of the twentieth century. Taking advantage of their monopolistic position in the industry, MPPC built larger studios, streamlined their productions, and became ever more technologically advanced. Their commitment to organizational excellence allowed MPPC to reap huge profits; it also led to the production of better films and lower costs for exhibiting those films. By 1910, filmmaking had become a thriving industry, one that would begin to shape the way that America looked in powerful and often unsettling ways.

Surprisingly, MPPC's monopolization of the industry lasted little more than a year, as independent companies started to resist Edison's corporate dominance. A number of these companies formed themselves into the Motion Picture Distributing and Sales Company, and by the early 1910s, 30 percent of the industry was controlled by business interests not connected to the MPPC. In the end, the U.S. government broke up the MPPC trust, and the independents were successful in carving out a permanent place in the industry—they were also instrumental in shifting the geographical center of the industry from the East Coast to the weather-friendly West Coast mecca of Hollywood. Although there were attempts to develop filmmaking sites in Florida and the Southwest, by 1915, the vast majority of people making motion pictures were doing so in California.

The Western and the Myth of American Exceptionalism

As motion pictures became an increasingly popular form of entertainment, individual filmmakers began distinguishing themselves by producing more complex narrative films. Among the first of these early filmmakers was Edwin S. Porter. Porter, who had been a navy electrician and a telegraph operator, worked for Edison producing a series of motion picture shorts before making his first two important films, *Life of an American Fireman* in 1902 and an adaptation of Harriet Beecher Stowe's 1852 novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1903 (Sklar, 2002). Porter began to experiment with different editing techniques in these films, and the latter set an industry standard with a running time of 15 minutes, a stunning accomplishment during the early years of cinema. After completing *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Porter turned his attention to the film for which he is best known, *The Great Train Robbery* (see: **Great Train Robbery, The**).

Comprised of 14 individual shots, *The Great Train Robbery* was a quantum leap forward in filmmaking, representing, as it did, what can be understood as the first modern narrative motion picture. Although Porter's shots were mostly stationary, he demonstrated his extraordinary skills as a filmmaker by cutting back and forth among these shots, allowing him to express simultaneous action and to provide context to images that by themselves had little meaning. With a running time of 11 minutes, the film tells the story of a ruthless band of outlaws who carry out a train robbery, make good their escape, and who are then hunted down and killed by the members of a posse. Featuring a fight on top of a moving train, men being brutally gunned down, explosions, and Porter's signature final shot of a cowboy (Broncho Billy Anderson) looking directly into the camera, raising his gun, and firing it at the audience, *The Great Train Robbery* amazed viewers with its imagistic articulation of human cruelty, revenge, and retribution.

Although it stands as a predecessor to later action adventure and hardboiled detective movies, *The Great Train Robbery* can properly be understood as the first of what many consider the quintessential American film type, the western. Sweeping tales of heroic men who conquered an ever-expanding frontier, westerns gave expression to iconic notions of American exceptionalism—John Winthrop's idea of the Puritans' new homeland as a divinely gifted "city upon a hill," Thomas Jefferson's description of the hard-won republic as an agrarian paradise, John L. O'Sullivan's claim that it was the nation's "manifest destiny" to spread west all the way to the Pacific shore. Generally set in the post-Civil War era—the period during which the nation's destiny was conclusively fulfilled—and set in territories west of the Mississippi, the western "created its own landscape, its own character-types, and its own narrative forms as a way of investing this time and place with mythic significance" (see: **Western, The**).

Oddly enough, by the time *The Great Train Robbery* was released in 1902—the same year that Owen Wister published *The Virginian*, generally considered the first "cowboy novel"—the American frontier had been "closed" for more than a decade. The closing of the American frontier during the late nineteenth century had been noted by figures such as Josiah Strong in his 1886 publication *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis* and Frederick Jackson Turner in his seminal paper "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," which Turner initially presented at

the 1893 meeting of the American Historical Society convened at the Columbian Exhibition in Chicago. In his paper, Turner had rather ominously suggested that the closing of the nation's frontier might have dire consequences, as "[u]p to our own day American history has been in large degree the history of the colonization of the Great West." In Turner's mind, it had been the nation's "perennial rebirth" along a frontier line, its "expansion westward with its new opportunities," that had furnished the "forces dominating American character" (Turner, 1997).

Interestingly, the western provided the filmic framework for Turner's notions concerning the conquest of the frontier: over and over again on the big screen—initially in hundreds of B-westerns made during the first three decades of the twentieth century, and then in dozens of classic westerns made from the late 1930s on—audiences watched with rapt attention as the American West was won from the forces of evil—Indians, Mexicans, cattle barons, railroad owners. Why, though, if the West had already been won by the time film westerns became so popular, did audiences flock to see these motion pictures?

Josiah Strong, perhaps, provided an answer to this question in *Our Country*. As sometimes happens, although he published his book a number of years before Turner presented his 1893 paper, Strong's work was not greeted with the same enthusiastic response with which Turner's was met—it was Turner, after all, who was credited with defining the "Frontier Thesis." This lack of recognition accorded Strong and his work is somewhat surprising, as Strong, much more so than Turner, it seems, appeared to understand just how desperately the nation's people would cling to the idea that America had been singled out—by God, Strong would argue—as an exceptional place.

Casting his discussion in much the same way that Turner would cast his, Strong laid the foundation for his arguments in a chapter of *Our Country* entitled "The Exhaustion of the Public Lands." Here, Strong suggested that the "rapid accumulation of our wealth, our comparative immunity from the consequences of unscientific legislation, our financial elasticity, our high wages, the general welfare and contentment of the people hitherto have all been due, in large measure, to an abundance of cheap land." The problem, he went on to say, was that "when the supply is exhausted, we shall enter upon a new era, and shall more rapidly approximate European conditions of life." Regardless of "how we may look at the matter," warned Strong, it "seems certain that, in twenty-five years' time, and probably before that date, the limitation of area in the United States will be felt" (Strong, 1963).

Clearly, this was essentially the same argument that Turner would make in his 1893 paper. Strong, though, went much further than did Turner in describing the unique qualities of the people who tamed the American frontier. In a stunning chapter of *Our Country* entitled "The Anglo-Saxon and World Future," Strong began by suggesting that the Anglo-Saxon "is representative of two great ideas, which are closely related." The first of these was the notion of "civil liberty," an idea that Strong claimed was enjoyed almost exclusively by "Anglo-Saxons: the English, the British colonists, and the people of the United States." In "modern times," said Strong, "the peoples whose love of liberty has won it, and whose genius for self-government has preserved it, have been Anglo-Saxons." The "other great idea," according to Strong, was that of

“a pure *spiritual* Christianity,” what he understood as a Protestant Christianity. It was, reasoned Strong, the “fire of liberty burning in the Saxon heart that flamed up against the absolutism of the Pope” during the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century. In Strong’s opinion, this could only lead to one conclusion: “the most spiritual Christianity in the world” was to be “found among Anglo-Saxons and their converts,” a group that had now become, especially in America, the “great missionary race.”

According to Strong, the weaving together of the love of civil liberty and pure spiritual Christianity ultimately gave rise to “another marked characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon,” what he called “an instinct or genius for colonizing”: “His unequaled energy, his indomitable perseverance, and his personal independence, made him a pioneer. He excels all others in pushing his way into new countries. It was those in whom this tendency was strongest that came to America, and this inherited tendency has been further developed by the westward sweep of successive generations across the continent” (Strong, 1963). It is hard to imagine a better description of the heroic figures who populated film westerns: undaunted by the terrible task that lay ahead of them, and infused with a powerful sense of God and nation, they were perfectly fitted to accomplish what Strong identified as the westward sweep across the continent. This, it seems, is what made these western heroes so appealing to American film audiences. Bound together in cinematic solidarity in darkened theaters across the country, viewers could live out the conquest of the savage frontier and the building of their great nation again and again.

The War Film and American Imperialism

Strong made no secret of the fact that he believed that the “solution for the spiritual, economic, and political problems of the day” lay in the spread of Anglo-Saxon ideals across the land—by force if necessary. Indeed, declared Strong in *Our Country*, “God, in his infinite wisdom and skill,” was “training the Anglo-Saxon race for an hour sure to come in the world’s future.” Then, intoned Strong, “will the world enter upon a new stage of its history—the final competition of races for which the Anglo-Saxon is being schooled” (Strong, 1963). According to Strong, because America’s frontiers had all been conquered—and its uncivilized peoples subdued—the final “competition of races” would necessarily be played out in foreign, and often exotic surroundings.

Strong’s prediction, as it turns out, proved correct, as little more than a decade after he published *Our Country*, the United States would wage a war against Spain that was not only fought on foreign shores but which also exposed a deeply troubling sense of racial intolerance that many Americans harbored. The Spanish-American War broke out in Cuba in 1898, and was quickly extended to the Philippines. Both of these island territories had for centuries been colonial possessions of Spain, and the indigenous peoples who populated them chafed at being controlled by their European overseers. When Cuban nationalists began a 10-year struggle for independence against the Spanish in 1868, most Americans supported the rebels, although few advocated armed intervention. This was especially true in the South, where, despite the “long-standing . . . desire to acquire the island, memories of the Civil War combat were too

vivid, the trials of Reconstruction were too immediate, and southern racial apprehensions were too pervasive” (Fry, 2002). Although the rebellion was ultimately put down by Spain—without U.S. military involvement—resistance to Spanish rule remained strong among Cubans throughout the 1880s. In 1896, the rebellion in Cuba once again exploded, and Spain sent 150,000 troops to the island. Led by General Valeriano “The Butcher” Weyler, the Spanish military sought to cut off rebel forces from the island’s workers by forcibly relocating thousands of the latter into *reconcentrados*, overcrowded, disease-ridden prison-camps, within which some 200,000 Cubans eventually died. As a result of this, many Americans, including numerous members of Congress, began to campaign for military intervention in Cuba on humanitarian grounds, a position that was fueled by “muckraking” reports coming back from the island.

Although a number of congressional resolutions urging U.S. military involvement were debated, President McKinley was worried that a Caribbean war would stall the economic recovery that finally seemed to be lifting the United States out of a severe 1890s depression. McKinley, then, pursued a policy of diplomacy, an executive position that was supported by both military leaders and businessmen who agreed that it would benefit the United States enormously if Spain put down the rebellion itself. This would remove the “distraction” of Cuba while also protecting U.S. commercial interests on the island, allowing America to turn its full attention to the “new frontier of exports” in Latin America and Asia (Williams, 2009).

All of this would change, of course, once the American battleship *Maine* exploded in the harbor of Havana in the spring of 1898, killing 260 sailors. Although the explosion was probably an accident caused by some problem onboard ship, an American naval court attributed it to an external mine planted by the Spanish. American newspapers, blaming mysterious Spanish spies for the catastrophe, now ran headlines that “seemed deliberately intended to inflame the public”: “‘The warship *Maine* was split in two by an enemy’s secret infernal machine’; ‘Captain Sigsbee practically declares that his ship was blown up by a mine or torpedo’; ‘Strong evidence of crime . . .’; ‘If this can be proven, the brutal nature of the Spanish will be shown in that they waited to spring the mine until after all men had retired for the night.’” One headline in particular spoke volumes about the tone of the time: “THE WHOLE COUNTRY THRILLS WITH WAR FEVER” (Wisn, 1955).

The editors of America’s newspapers did their part by publishing the muckraking stories sent back from Cuba accompanied by prowar illustrations depicting such things as cheering crowds sending their troops off to war or “Uncle Sam” hailing his “latest, greatest, shortest war.” News agencies also utilized the recently developed form of reportage that would come to be known as photojournalism, releasing heroic and often startling images of brave American troops and starving Cubans. Film, however, would become the medium of choice for spreading America’s message concerning the “march of freedom” in Cuba (see: **War Film, The**).

Significantly, even though “no motion-picture films were made of the fighting in Cuba,” the “war with Spain in 1898 gave regular film producers their first opportunity for spectacle” (Sklar, 1994). Albert Smith and the British-born J. Stuart Blackton, for example, produced for the Vitagraph Company what is considered the first

commercial combat picture, *Tearing Down the Spanish Flag*. The short film, comprised of a single, enormously powerful scene with a flagpole set against the sky and a pair of hands reaching up and taking down the Spanish flag and replacing it with Old Glory, was shot on a Manhattan rooftop. Blackton and Smith took advantage of the fervent audience response to their first combat film, following it up with the more complex production of *The Battle of Santiago Bay*, a cinematic depiction of the victory of the U.S. Navy over the Spanish fleet in Cuba.

America's "Splendid Little War," as it was dubbed, lasted only a few short months, with United States troops quickly driving the Spanish from both Cuba and the Philippines. The war would prove to be a great political and economic success, as the United States forced Spain not only to surrender its sovereignty over Cuba, but also to cede to the United States Puerto Rico, Guam, and several other small islands and to give up its colonial authority in the Philippines. Ironically, however, once it had won the war, the nation found itself in an unsettling position, having to decide whether or not to take imperial control of the Philippines. Although he claimed that he never wanted all of the islands that made up the Pacific territory, President McKinley ultimately came down on the side of annexation. This was necessary for several reasons, suggested the president. The islands, of course, could not be given back to Spain, as that would be "cowardly and dishonorable." They also could not be turned over to economic rivals of the United States, such as France or Germany, as that would be "bad business and discreditable." Nor could they be left on their own, as they were clearly "unfit" to govern themselves and self-rule would soon lead to "anarchy and misrule" that was worse than that in Spain. The only solution to this colonial dilemma, claimed McKinley, was to "take control of the islands and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them, and by God's grace do the very best we could by them, as our fellow men for whom Christ also died" (Zinn, 1999).

McKinley's message concerning the need to uplift and Christianize uncivilized foreign populations, so much like that preached by Strong, would be taken up and refined by political leaders such as Theodore Roosevelt, who became president after McKinley was assassinated in 1901, and Woodrow Wilson, who was elected to his first term in the White House in 1912, on the eve of World War I. Filmmakers also did their part in communicating the idea that America bore a responsibility to intervene militarily in order to tame foreign frontiers, churning out a slew of war films between 1898, when the Spanish-American War began, and 1914, when World War I began. Bearing titles such as *A Day with the Soldier Boys*, *Rally Round the Flag*, *Faithful unto Death*, and *None but the Brave Deserve the Fair*, these films "were in effect recruiting posters that moved, calculated to stir the emotions and stun the intelligence" (Butler, 1974).

Wilson resisted calls for America to enter WWI during his first term in office, arguing that what was going on across the Atlantic was strictly a European affair. Filmmakers followed suit, shifting their focus away from the production of prowar films, like those released during and after the Spanish-American War, toward antiwar pictures such as *Be Neutral* (1914), *War Is Hell* (1915), and *The Terrors of War* (1917). These films acted to support President Wilson's 1914 isolationist call for the public to be "neutral in fact as well as in name," "impartial in thought as well as action," reinforcing

the message of his first term that the European conflict was “a war with which we have nothing to do, whose causes cannot touch us” (Horowitz, 2005).

Although the United States refused to become directly involved in the war that raged in Europe during its early years, geopolitical concerns eventually led Wilson to become a wartime president after he was reelected in 1916. Now seeking to convince the American people that the United States should enter the war in order to make the world “safe for democracy”—especially after he had asked them to reelect him because he had “kept them out of war”—Wilson turned for advice to one of his most loyal supporters, George Creel. Appointing Creel head of what came to be called the Committee on Public Information, the president allowed this powerful figure to shape the nation’s war message (**see: Committee on Public Information, The**).

Taking advantage of the extensive resources provided to him by the U.S. government, once appointed, Creel immediately set about developing a core group of public relations people and professional historians to assist him in putting in motion a campaign of “moral publicity.” He also called on his entertainment industry associates to produce propaganda pictures that could be used to demonstrate the wholesomeness of American life and to “slander all things German.” Wilson had himself seen the power of the cinematic message firsthand when he allowed D. W. Griffith’s *The Birth of a Nation* to be screened in the White House in 1915 (**see: Birth of a Nation, The**). Considered by most film historians as the most important motion picture of the silent era that extended from 1915 through 1929 (**see: Silent Era, The**), *The Birth of a Nation* was a technically brilliant example of early filmmaking that gave expression to a profoundly troubling message concerning black-white race relations in America. Adapted from the Thomas Dixon novel *The Clansman*, a work that depicted the post-Civil War Ku Klux Klan as the last, best hope of Southern whites beset by emancipated, maniacal blacks, Griffith’s film depicted “the creation of a new nation after years of struggle and division, a nation of Northern and Southern whites united ‘in common defense of their Aryan birthright,’ with the vigilante riders of the Klan as their symbol” (Sklar, 1994).

Realizing that *The Birth of a Nation* was extremely controversial, Dixon, who had known Wilson when both attended Johns Hopkins University, approached the president and invited him to attend a screening of the picture. Fearing that it might appear unseemly for him to venture out while he was mourning the death of his wife, Wilson suggested that the film be screened in the White House. After watching the film, Wilson, who had displayed his own racist attitudes after he was elected in 1912 by creating separate work spaces for blacks and whites in Washington, D.C., is purported to have uttered, “It is like writing history with lightning. And my only regret is that it is all so terribly true.”

Although it was met with a great deal of resistance, especially from black leaders such as Booker T. Washington and social progressives such as Jane Addams, the founder of Hull House, *The Birth of a Nation* played to packed houses across the nation and garnered glowing reviews. It also set the tone for war films created by filmmakers working in conjunction with Creel’s Committee for Public Information. Filled with salacious images of crazed Germans and bearing titles such as *The Prussian Cur* (1918), *The Hun Within*

(1918), and *The Kaiser: The Beast of Berlin* (1918), the films spread a message of racial hatred and exclusionary nationalism that helped to usher in one of America's most conservative political, cultural, and religious eras, a period extending roughly from the end of WWI in 1918 until the election of Franklin Roosevelt in 1932.

The Golden Age of Film Comedy

Beyond the many westerns and war films that made their way to the big screen during the first decades of the twentieth century, hundreds of film comedies were also made during this time. Indeed, the silent era years that stretched from 1915 to 1929 came to be identified as the Golden Age of Film Comedy. In retrospect, it is not surprising that film comedies became so popular at this point in time, as the thousands of viewers who watched these films were in desperate need of some relief from an increasingly troubled world. Already overwhelmed by what felt like the ceaseless pressures of industrialization and urban life, people had been shocked by the horrifying carnage wrought by a Great War that left millions dead and millions more physically and psychologically wounded. Before they could come to grips with what had seemed the impossibility of a worldwide military conflict, they were once again rocked, this time by an influenza pandemic that swept across the globe and in two short years between 1918 and 1919 left between 20 and 40 million dead—more than had perished during all of World War I. If only for brief time, then, film comedies provided movie audiences with a chance to laugh.

Golden age film comedies traced their roots to the vaudeville programs that had become so popular during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Characterized by song, dance, juggling, and acrobatics, vaudeville programs also typically included comedy acts, most of which were oriented around physical comedy. As motion pictures became more sophisticated, and more profitable during the silent era, gifted physical comedians such as Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, and Harold Lloyd, all deeply influenced by vaudeville, began to showcase their skills on the big screen (**see: Chaplin, Charlie; Keaton, Buster; and Lloyd, Harold**).

Chaplin, Keaton, and Lloyd were all enormously talented—and willing to put themselves in harm's way by performing their own stunts—and film fans flocked to theaters to watch their pictures. Like dozens of other lesser known film comedians, Chaplin, Keaton, and Lloyd all relied on lowbrow humor—pratfalls and sight gags, strung together one after another, wrapped around flimsy narratives in an attempt to elicit laughs—they just did it better than the others. Given this, however, the social significance of the pictures produced by these three filmmakers should not be underestimated. Ironically, in the very same moment that the filmic idea of the American hero was being defined in westerns and war films, Chaplin, Keaton, and Lloyd were shaping their own versions of what can be understood as the antihero: the little guy—given particularly poignant expression by Chaplin with his “Little Tramp” character—mercilessly buffeted about by an increasingly mechanized world and forced to use his ingenuity, physical abilities, and childish charm to survive. Like the vast majority of viewers who

watched their films, the antiheroic characters played by Chaplin, Keaton, and Lloyd were invariably knocked down by life; they never failed to get back up, however, in hilariously appealing ways, and to soldier on in a world that too often left little time for laughter.

The Movie Star, Scandals, and Censorship

Although Chaplin, Keaton, and Lloyd all became major motion picture stars, it was Chaplin who became the offscreen sensation. Wildly popular with his fans, Chaplin was able to use his celebrity—and the profits it generated—as a bargaining tool in his negotiations with studio heads over his salary and his demand for creative control of his pictures. Understanding the power of the cinema to convey messages to the public—and believing that his celebrity allowed him the privilege to speak his mind in ways that the average person could not—Chaplin began to make his political ideas known to the public, both on-screen and off. Although personally anti-militaristic, Chaplin supported America's entry into WWI; attempting to enlist, he failed his physical and was turned away. He did his part for the war effort, however, touring with fellow motion picture stars Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks on the third Liberty Bond Drive. Ironically, Chaplin caused a stir in 1921 when, readying himself for a return to his homeland in England, he was asked what he thought of Bolshevism. The normally forthright Chaplin provided an answer that many found ambiguous, leading some to conclude that he was a communist sympathizer, a problematic position during the conservative 1920s. During the early 1940s, as America entered WWII, Chaplin ran afoul of FBI director J. Edgar Hoover over his political affiliations, and, after a decade of accusations—and facing a second paternity suit—Chaplin effectively went into exile in Switzerland.

Interestingly, Chaplin's offscreen troubles only seemed to make him more popular with his adoring fans. Such expression of adoration for motion picture personalities emerged early on in film history, as audiences began to recognize the actors who appeared in various roles in different films. These first film fans began to press studios for behind-the-scenes information about their favorite actors; realizing that selling their stars could be extremely profitable, studios responded by setting aside sections in their trade publications in which they profiled popular film personalities. By 1911, the first fan magazines began to appear. With titles like *Motion Picture Story Magazine* and *Photoplay*, the information in these “gossip columns” was tightly controlled by the studios (Sklar, 2002) (**see: Movie Star, The**).

The first male silent movie stars were men like Rudolph Valentino and Douglas Fairbanks, who played swashbuckling heroes on-screen (**see: Valentino, Rudolph; Fairbanks, Douglas; Action-Adventure Film, The**). The two stars could not have been more different. Although the smoldering Valentino made women swoon in theaters, his personal life was rife with romantic despair, as he never seemed to be able to find the right relationship. His willingness to titillate audiences by creating characters marked with a thinly veiled androgyny also made him a controversial figure among male viewers, most of whom seemed deeply to resent—and fear, it seems—his

extraordinary appeal. Fairbanks, on the other hand, was a man's man, the ideal "American type"—"instinctive, rugged, and fiercely independent" (Lewis, 2008).

Female movie stars were every bit as popular as their male counterparts during the early years of cinema, none more so than Mary Pickford (**see: Pickford, Mary**). Known for her girlish good looks—she continued to play adolescent roles well into her twenties—Pickford replaced the first female movie star of the silent era, Florence Lawrence, becoming the new big-screen "it" girl by the mid-1910s. A true rags-to-riches success story, Pickford began playing bit parts in 1908, earning a respectable \$5 per week. By 1913, now a member of Adolph Zukor's Famous Players, she was bringing in an amazing \$2,000 per week. In order to assure production quality, Zukor eventually gave Pickford, who by that time was earning a staggering \$10,000 per picture, her own division, Artcraft. Demonstrating that women could be equally influential figures in the film industry, Pickford joined her future husband, Douglas Fairbanks, along with Charlie Chaplin and D. W. Griffith to found United Artists. Seeking exclusive control over their film projects, the company proved untenable in the hands of its founders, who ultimately turned over the day-to-day operations of United Artists to Joseph Schenk.

Pickford's seemingly perpetual girlishness was the polar opposite of Theda Bara's wickedly erotic vamp persona. The first example of a star who was created by a studio, Bara was born Theodosia Goodman in Ohio. She was given the name Theda Bara—an anagram of Arab Death—by William Fox (who launched the Fox Film Corp.), and after exotic stories were concocted about her being the daughter of a sheik and an Arabian princess who was involved in the "black arts," she became notorious for playing the "vamp"—a vampiress whom men could not resist. The studio released incredibly provocative publicity photos of Bara, and she did her part on screen playing vamps that exist only to seduce and destroy powerful men (Sklar, 2008; Lewis, 2002).

As the decade of the Roaring Twenties dawned, film fans began to demand increasingly personal information about what their stars were doing when they were not busy making films. Some stars, who were making more in a single week than most working people made in an entire year, lived lives of conspicuous consumption, spending untold sums on houses, cars, and elaborate, often drug-fueled parties—and fans longed to know what that was like, even if only vicariously. Realizing that there was money to be made, mainstream newspapers began to run stories about the decadent lifestyles of Hollywood celebrities, which film fans could hardly wait to read and share with each other.

Although much of what was reported in the stories about movie stars was fabricated, a distressing amount was true. The first star scandal with fatally tragic consequences exploded in 1920, when a *Ziegfeld Follies* showgirl named Olive Thomas was found dead of an apparent drug overdose in a room at the Hotel de Crillon, in Paris. The incident, which turned out to be a bigger story than it probably would have been had not Thomas been married to Jack Pickford, Mary's brother, led Archbishop George Mundelein to publish a cautionary work on the motion picture industry entitled *The Danger of Hollywood: A Warning to Young Girls*. Although Mundelein's warning seemed overweening to many, it proved prescient when one of the most

notorious scandals in film industry history broke in 1921. Although details of the case were sketchy at best, it involved accusations that film comedy star Roscoe “Fatty” Arbuckle had raped and murdered a young starlet named Virginia Rappe at a sensational party—even by Hollywood standards—that had stretched from L.A. to San Francisco, 400 miles away. Although Arbuckle was never convicted of the crime, his career was effectively over after he was put on trial in 1922 (Lewis, 2002).

Realizing that some aspects of Hollywood were, indeed, out of control, and that stories such as that involving Arbuckle could negatively affect their financial bottom line, the studios created the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA) in 1922 (**see: Motion Pictures Producers and Distributors of America**). The MPPDA was headed up by former postmaster general Will Hays, to whom fell the task of convincing local and state-level reform groups that the film industry was every bit as concerned as they were that Hollywood remain scandal free and concern itself only with producing films that were wholesomely entertaining and that provided appropriate social messages. Although there were those in Hollywood who supported the creation of the MPPDA for the right reasons—to act as an oversight agency that could help to prevent situations like that involving Arbuckle—most were simply worried that if the process of censorship was carried out by reform groups, Hollywood would become overly regulated (**see: Hays Office and Censorship, The**).

Censorship had been an issue since the birth of cinema—once it became clear that motion pictures were more than simply entertainment novelties and that they actually could be used to communicate messages to viewers, questions immediately began to arise concerning what those messages should be and how some of them might be censored—so it is hardly surprising that in a post-WWI America marked by the rise of the second Ku Klux Klan, the Red Scare reaction to communism, the Scopes Trial and the articulation of a formal Christian fundamentalism, two-thirds of the nation’s states were actively attempting to pass regulatory legislation that would act to control an industry that had grown as powerful, persuasive, and, many thought, as perverse as filmmaking. What is surprising is that the creation of the MPPDA actually convinced 35 of 36 states that were considering imposing regulatory legislation on the distribution and exhibition of motion pictures that it was safe to halt their efforts. Much of this, it seems clear, had to do with the appointment of Hays to head the organization, as he was considered by almost everyone—inside and outside the industry—as just the kind of no-nonsense, morally appropriate man who could get the job done. At least for now, then, the film industry would be left to police itself.

Technological Innovation, the Studio System, and New Forms of Censorship

On October 6, 1927, moviemaking changed forever when *The Jazz Singer* opened in New York City’s Warners’ Theatre (**see: Jazz Singer, The**). Considered the first sound film, *The Jazz Singer* starred Al Jolson, a Jewish singing star who was already well known as a stage performer. Jolson had made a name for himself in vaudeville, often darkening his face and whitening his lips with makeup and performing his numbers before eager white audiences in what came to be called “blackface” (**see:**

Blackface). Although it received rather tepid receptions from audiences and lukewarm reviews from critics when it was first released—Jolson was lauded for his singing but universally panned for his attempt at acting—the film is noteworthy for ushering in a new era in cinema, one marked by increasingly sophisticated expressions of sound that made motion pictures seem even more lifelike (**see: Sound**).

The Jazz Singer was not actually a synchronized sound film, as it had been shot as a silent picture with the soundtrack added later. Indeed, except for the musical numbers, there are only two dialogue sequences in the picture—one of particular note, where Jolson looks directly into the camera and, prophetically as it turned out, enthusiastically says to the audience: “Wait a minute. Wait a minute. You ain’t heard nothin’ yet!” The changeover to synchronous sound did not occur overnight. In fact, like *The Jazz Singer*, the majority of early sound films, such as William Wellman’s *Wings* and F. W. Murnau’s *Sunrise*, were really hybrid offerings, mixing together silent and sound formats. But there was no disguising the fact that viewers wanted pictures with sound, and after 1927, studios invested heavily in producing the sound films that their audiences craved.

Although it did not have quite the effect on film production and viewing that sound did, the introduction of color nevertheless dramatically changed the way films were produced and viewed (**see: Color**). Experiments with coloring film date back to the middle of the nineteenth century, and by 1905, the French Pathé company had moved from hand tinting film to running it through tinting machines, making the process much less labor intensive and time consuming. It also allowed them more effectively to create motion pictures that expressed “moods”—individual segments could now quickly be colored with particular shades expressive of different emotions and experiences. In 1915, the Technicolor Corporation was formed, and in 1917, the company showcased a new two-color process they had developed in *The Gulf Between*. By the early 1930s, Technicolor had developed a three-color process that would become the industry standard for two decades—the Technicolor process required that films be shot with special cameras, which Technicolor owned and leased to studios, allowing the company to dominate their segment of the industry until Eastman Kodak introduced a single-color process in 1950 that could be used on a wide number of cameras available on the market.

Although moviemaking had always been a complex process, the introduction of new technologies, especially sound, made the process infinitely more complicated—and financially risky. With the advent of sound, for instance, a “myriad of technical problems was created whose solution demanded the soundproofing of studios, the wiring of cinemas and the employment of a whole new range of technicians whose services had never previously been necessary” (Schindler, 1996). The expense and expertise required for filmmaking, coupled with the responsibility of self-regulation, increasingly shifted the control of producing, distributing, and exhibiting films to a small group of very powerful studios—the “Big Five,” Loew’s, Inc., RKO, Twentieth Century-Fox, Paramount, and Warner Bros., and the “Little Three,” United Artists, Columbia, and Universal Studios—which were headed by enormously influential corporate leaders. Mostly Eastern European Jews—a blow to those in the industry such as

Edison and the other company heads at MPPC with anti-Semitic sensibilities who had done their best to keep men of Jewish descent out of the corporate world of cinema—studio heads such as Carl Laemmle, William Fox, Adolph Zukor, Marcus Lowe, and the four Warner Brothers were not filmmakers, at least not in any artistic sense. Rather, much like the industrialists who had come before them, they were shrewd—and often ruthless—businessmen who created what came to be called the “Studio System” (**see: Studio System, The**). Seeking to limit competition and to maximize profits, these men each created a studio that functioned as a “self-contained filmmaking factory with its own labor pool of producers, directors, writers, players, and technicians, turning out many films a month during the years of peak production”—roughly from 1930 to 1950 (Kolker, 2000).

Will Hays did his part to help insulate the studios during the late 1920s by offering up the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America’s first formalized self-regulatory system of censorship. Comprised of a list of “Don’ts” and “Be Carefuls,” Hays’s censorship system sought to regulate “what the uneducated, unwashed masses that consumed motion pictures so avidly might *do* with what they saw up there on the screen” (Lewis, 2008). This notion of regulating what was viewed by the less than civilized masses harkened back to the very beginnings of cinema, when what proved so problematic about motion pictures for many reformed-minded Americans was the fact that they were largely marketed to immigrants and native-born members of the lower classes who represented the majority of the nation’s newly emerging industrial mass-consumer culture. Now that the affluence of the 1920s had swollen the ranks of lower- and middle-class mass consumers, Hays and the MPPDA felt responsible at least to suggest to filmmakers what was appropriate for inclusion in their motion pictures. The list of Don’ts, which included things that Hays deemed inappropriate “irrespective of the manner in which they are treated,” included profanity, “suggestive or licentious nudity,” miscegenation, childbirth, and drug trafficking. The Be Carefuls were especially concerned with depictions of crime—theft, robbery, safecracking, arson, smuggling, and rape—that might prove to be “potentially informative” to members of the lower classes who might be tempted to cross over legal lines (Pramaggiore and Wallis, 2005).

Although Hays’s lists were well intentioned, they had little effect on the way that motion pictures were made, as most studios simply ignored the MPPDA regulations. Now convinced that the industry could not—or would not—regulate itself, church-related and public organizations—Mothers of Minnesota, Combat, the NAACP, the Catholic War Veterans, the Parent Teacher Association—pooled their efforts in an attempt to force studios to produce more appropriate material. Concerned about protecting the studios from becoming overly regulated by citizens’ groups, Hays turned to Father Daniel A. Lord, a Jesuit priest, to develop an even more formal censorship document than the MPPDA’s lists of Don’ts and Be Carefuls (**see: Religion and Censorship in Film**). Unrestrained by the sort of relationship to the film industry that obviously influenced Hays’s decisions concerning censorship, Father Lord made his position clear in the Motion Picture Production Code (MPPC), which he was instrumental in defining in 1930. Unlike the merely suggestive Don’ts and Be Carefuls, the

MPPC set out, in minute detail, 12 areas of grave concern, including Crimes Against the Law, Sex, Profanity, Religion, Obscenity, National Feelings, and Repellent Subjects. Ironically, although he took no part in producing it, the MPPC was ultimately labeled the “Hays Code.”

Although it seemed that should they want to avoid the wrath of church and citizen groups, the studios would have to abide by the Production Code, between 1930 and 1934 they largely ignored it, much like they had Hays’s Don’ts and Be Carefuls. Producing dozens of what came to be called “pre-Code” films between 1930 and 1934—the Code was in place during this time, just disregarded—the studios thumbed their noses at those who sought to control them—especially the Catholic Church. From Mae West comedies like *She Done Him Wrong* (1933), to monster films such as *Frankenstein* (1931) and *King Kong* (1933), to melodramas like *Madam Satan* and *Young Sinners*—which sought to seduce viewers into theaters with the tagline “Hot youth at its wildest . . . loving madly, living freely”—the studios allowed their filmmakers to produce motion pictures that flaunted the very things the Code sought to regulate.

No motion picture genre violated the Production Code more than did the gangster film (**see: Gangster Film, The**). It is certainly no coincidence that early sound-era gangster films began to be made at just the moment that the Production Code was initially put into effect in 1930. After a decade of relative prosperity during which increasing numbers of Americans were able to afford what had once been considered luxuries, the nation was stunned when the stock market crashed in 1929 and the country—indeed, the entire world—descended into the dreadful depths of the Great Depression. By the time Franklin Roosevelt took office in the spring of 1933, unemployment stood at a staggering 25 percent and more and more banks were failing. Unprotected by any sort of government-backed financial guarantees—the Federal Insurance Deposit Corporation (FDIC) was not put into place until 1936, under Roosevelt’s so-called second New Deal—many Americans had arrived at their banks to find the doors locked and their hard-earned savings gone. Even after Roosevelt instituted a four-day banking holiday the day after he was inaugurated, and was eventually able to stabilize the banks, the monies that had been lost were never recouped.

Bitter and confused, many people blamed the banks for losing their money; and thus it was not surprising that they showed little sympathy when these institutions began to be robbed with alarming frequency by Depression-era gangsters. By the early 1930s, gangsters had already become part of American culture. Figures like Al Capone—incredibly violent, ultra-organized thugs who dressed in silk suits and portrayed themselves as men of the people—had emerged during the Prohibition era of the 1920s. Born and raised in New York, and eventually rising to the top of Chicago’s criminal underground, Capone controlled speakeasies, bookie joints, and houses of prostitution. Other flashy outlaws, such as Bonnie and Clyde and Pretty Boy Floyd, became prominent during the Depression Era, most notably as bank robbers. Although like Capone, Bonnie and Clyde and Pretty Boy Floyd were nothing more than ruthless thugs who cared nothing about the lives they destroyed, their extravagant, uncontrolled lifestyles had a certain appeal for average people overwhelmed by poverty and despair.

Realizing how appealing many Americans found the nation's criminals to be, filmmakers began producing dozens of gangster pictures during the 1930s. Three of the most important of these were Mervyn LeRoy's *Little Caesar* (1931), starring Edward G. Robinson, and Howard Hawks's *Scarface* (1932), starring Paul Muni, both of which were loosely based on the criminal life of Al Capone; and William Wellman's *The Public Enemy* (1931). Making stars of their leading men, all three of these films were immensely popular with audiences, a fact that supporters of the Production Code found troubling. Even though the criminals in these pictures almost always fell from grace and died in the end, reform-minded members of church groups such as the Catholic Legion of Decency, which emerged in 1933, still felt that gangster films glorified their immoral lifestyles.

Although by 1934 the studios had resisted attempts at censorship for more than a decade, what they had not counted on was the willingness of the Catholic Church to call for its members, which numbered in the hundreds of thousands in America, to boycott inappropriate films—or more ominously, all motion pictures. This was no small threat, as George Mundelein, for instance, who had written *The Danger of Hollywood: A Warning to Young Girls* in 1921, and who was now Bishop of Chicago, had a huge account with a Wall Street firm that administered mortgages for a number of Hollywood studios, and the prominent Catholic A. P. Giannini was president of Bank of America. Finally convinced that they had misplayed their hands by ignoring the mandates of the MPPDA and that the industry could indeed be hurt by boycotts, the studios began to abide by the Hays Code in 1934. In July of that year, the MPPDA created the Production Code Administration (PCA) as an industry oversight agency that would insure the studios continued to produce what were deemed appropriate motion pictures. Hand-picked by Bishop Mundelein, the lay Catholic, staunchly pro-censorship Joseph Breen was tapped to head the PCA in 1934—his reign would last for the next two decades, during which the Hays Code would greatly affect how motion pictures were made.

Musicals, Romantic Comedies, and Populism during the Depression

As the Depression deepened, Americans, much as they had in the past, turned to the cinema for relief, especially to a new film type that took full advantage of the industry's evolution toward sound. Not surprisingly, one of the film genres that benefitted most handsomely from the introduction of sound was the movie musical (**see: Musical, The; Music in Film**). Although it initially proved difficult to produce musicals that audiences liked—large, cumbersome cameras made it tricky to film dance numbers, and film directors found themselves at a loss to determine how to transpose stage-oriented variety shows to the big screen—the genre took off in 1933 when Warner Bros. began to release the first in a series of musicals oriented around show-business narratives with dance numbers choreography by Busby Berkeley (**see: Berkeley, Busby**). In pictures such as *42nd Street* (1933), *Gold Diggers of 1933* (1933), *Footlight Parade* (1933), and *Dames* (1934), Berkeley “completely freed the musical from

adherence to stage conventions,” allowing the camera to soar over the heads and even between the legs of scores of scantily clad female dancers, much to viewers’ delight (Sklar, 2002).

Another incredibly popular form of film musical that appeared alongside the Berkeley spectacles of the 1930s focused on individual performers and their romantic relationships. Although it was often necessary to suspend disbelief as everyone on screen broke into a show number, audiences loved watching their favorite performers dance their way into each other’s hearts—especially Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers (**see: Astaire, Fred**). Rogers was already a seasoned screen professional by the time she linked up with Astaire, having carved out a niche as a “wisecracking dame” in pictures like *Hat Check Girl* (1932) and *Professional Sweetheart* (1933) and also having worked with Berkeley on *42nd Street* and *Gold Diggers*. Astaire, who had danced for years with his sister, had finally given Hollywood a shot, giving rise to one of the most famous screen test evaluations in cinematic history: “Can’t sing. Can’t act. Slightly bald. Can dance a little.” Believing that being able to “dance a little” was, perhaps, enough, RKO gave him a chance. They almost killed his career before it could get going, though, when they loaned him out to MGM, who paired him with Joan Crawford in the abysmal *Dancing Lady* (1933). Luckily, RKO brought him back and teamed him with Rogers in *Flying Down to Rio* (1933), and the die was cast: Fred and Ginger—as they were affectionately known to fans—would dance together in nine films between 1933 and 1939. In films such as *Top Hat* (1935) and *Swing Time* (1937), scored by composers such as Irving Berlin (“Cheek to Cheek”), Jerome Kern (“The Way You Look Tonight”), and George Gershwin (“A Foggy Day”), Fred and Ginger wowed audiences with their elegantly staged, beautifully articulated musical numbers.

In 1934, just a year after Fred and Ginger were flying down to Rio and falling in love, three motion pictures were released that defined another new film type, the romantic comedy (**see: Romantic Comedy, The**). Although they bore similarities to the comedies that had been so popular during the golden age of film comedies, *It Happened One Night*, *Twentieth Century*, and *The Thin Man* provided audiences with something different: film couples who, although they did not usually dance and sing together, still possessed “slangy, combative, humorous, unsentimental” and “powerfully romantic” sensibilities, and who, in the end, overcame adversity to live happily ever after (Harvey, 1987).

Although films about romance certainly had the potential to cross over the censorship boundaries put in place by the MPPDA—Frank Capra’s *It Happened One Night*, for instance, finds its lead characters, Peter and Ellie, forced to spend the night together in the same motel room, although they are not married—(**see: It Happened One Night**) the scores of romantic comedies that were made between 1934 and 1954, the years during which the Production Code exercised its greatest control over Hollywood filmmaking, were generally representative of the wholesome, morally appropriate cinematic offerings for which reform groups had been calling. Indeed, unlike the gangster films that reform groups found so objectionable because of their glorification of the profligate lifestyles of criminals, many romantic comedies, especially the screwball variation of this genre, poked fun at the extravagance displayed by the members of

the upper class, suggesting that it rendered them incapable of understanding the plight of the average person. As the middle-class, everyman Peter says to the upper-class Ellie after giving her a piggyback ride in *It Happened One Night*: “To be a piggybacker requires complete relaxation—a warm heart and a loving nature.” “And rich people,” asks Ellie, “have none of these qualifications I suppose?” “Not one,” Peter responds. “You’re prejudiced,” says a chastened Ellie. “Show me a good piggybacker,” declares Peter, “and I’ll show you somebody who’s a real human. Take Abraham Lincoln for instance—a natural piggybacker.”

In the minds of many, the allusion to Lincoln as a real human might just as easily have been applied to Franklin Roosevelt, who, in 1934, was deeply involved in trying to resolve a national crisis that seemed in many ways as profoundly unsettling as that which Lincoln had faced almost a century earlier. Roosevelt had swept into office in the spring of 1933 and immediately began to implement his New Deal programs. Although initially not as radical as what would come during his second term, when he would put in place huge social service programs such as Social Security—when he entered office in 1933, Roosevelt agreed with Herbert Hoover that financial support for those who were suffering from the devastating effects of the Depression should come by way of work programs and not through the creation of a modern welfare state such as those that would be fashioned in European countries—New Deal programs such as the National Recovery Act (NRA) and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) went a long way toward helping middle-class citizens who had fallen into poverty to get back on their feet.

Although Roosevelt had come from privilege, the majority of Americans—who elected and reelected him four times—saw him as a man of the people. Roosevelt played his part, reassuring the American people, especially by way of his “fireside chats,” that things would be okay. Filmmakers during the 1930s and early 1940s gave expression to the president’s New Deal sensibilities on the big screen with populist offerings that provided hope to a desperate nation. Of the many gifted directors who were making motion pictures that expressed populist sentiments during this time—one thinks of Michael Curtiz’s *Dodge City* (1938), or William Wyler’s *The Westerner* (1940), or John Ford’s *The Young Mr. Lincoln* (1939) and *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940)—perhaps the filmmaker who is most closely connected to the populist cinema of the 1930s and ’40s is Frank Capra. Capra followed the success of *It Happened One Night* with *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* (1936), *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939), and *It’s a Wonderful Life* (1946) (see: **Mr. Deeds Goes to Town; Mr. Smith Goes to Washington; It’s a Wonderful Life**). Capra chose the perfect leading men for these three pictures, Gary Cooper for the first and Jimmy Stewart for the latter two. Both were tall and a bit gangly, and neither possessed the matinee-idol good looks of someone like Errol Flynn—in other words, they were more like us. Cast as Longfellow Deeds, Jefferson Smith, and George Bailey, respectively, Cooper and Stewart represented “classic Capra heroes—small town, shrewd, lovable, and triumphant by virtue of their honesty and sincerity” (Schindler, 1996).

While Jefferson Deeds must reconcile the problems that come with becoming suddenly rich—he inherits a \$20 million estate in Manhattan—and Jefferson Smith must

fight the good fight of the people in Washington, D.C.—he suddenly becomes a U.S. senator—George Bailey never leaves his bucolic home of Bedford Falls. Like most of us, he has grand plans—he wants to travel the world and to design buildings that soar to the sky. His plans are foiled, again and again, however, and he ends up on the verge of suicide before a charmingly clumsy angel named Clarence (Henry Travers) steps in and shows him what would have happened had he never been born. George is surprised to learn that, in his own simple way, he has actually made the world a much better place and that he really does have a wonderful life.

The War Years and Postwar Discontent

Capra's message was clear in *It's A Wonderful Life*: it is family, friends, and community that count most, that make a man truly wealthy—"A toast to my big brother George," says Harry Bailey. "The richest man in town." It is not insignificant that it is Harry Bailey who gives this toast, as he makes it back to Bedford Falls just in time to celebrate George only because his brother saved his life when they were boys. A Navy pilot, Harry is a decorated war hero who himself saves the lives of scores of American soldiers aboard a transport ship by shooting down a Japanese plane. References to Harry's heroic deed provide us with a context for Capra's film, which was released in 1946. By the time the film was in theaters, Roosevelt and Hitler had both died and Churchill was out of office, Germany had surrendered and the plans for Hitler's "Final Solution" had been revealed, and atomic bombs had been dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing hundreds of thousands almost instantly and forcing the Japanese to surrender, as well. People across the globe also received the sobering news that World War II had been even bloodier than the Great War, with 55 million people perishing during the course of this long, brutal struggle.

Although it might have seemed natural for post-WWI filmmakers to produce motion pictures that depicted the United States as the heroic power that had turned the tide in a global conflict, especially given how many "rally-round-the-flag" pictures were released after the Spanish-American War, once the true horrors of the Great War were revealed, American filmmakers began to make the first antiwar pictures—D. W. Griffith's *Hearts of the World* (1918), King Vidor's *The Big Parade* (1925), and Lewis Milestone's *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930) are powerful examples. During and after WWII, however, as the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union began to heat up and U.S. troops were deployed to Korea, filmmakers began churning out prowar pictures. From Capra's *Why We Fight* series—supported by the government's Office of War Information—to Wellman's *The Story of G. I. Joe*, these films, and scores of others like them, depicted the invincible American hero fighting a just war in order to maintain America's democratic stability and religious freedom (see: **War Film, The**). Although there were non-genre war films released at this time, such as Michael Curtiz's *Casablanca* (1942) and William Wyler's *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946), that were more narratively complex, almost without exception formulaic, prowar combat films, set in Europe and the Pacific, and to a lesser extent in Korea, would continue to be made until Americans grew tired of war and its brutal

effects after the nation suffered its first military defeat in Vietnam in the mid-1970s (see: *Casablanca* and *Best Years of Our Lives, The*).

Oddly, in the same moment that audiences were flocking to theaters to view combat pictures that picked up and extended the filmic myth of American exceptionalism, they were also being drawn toward a new motion picture type, eventually dubbed “film noir” in the 1950s by French critics and filmmakers (see: *Film Noir*). Although film noir—literally “black,” or “dark” film—is often defined as a film genre, it is probably not correct to think of it in this way; film noir is actually better understood as a style of filmmaking that crosses over genres and is often used in non-genre films. Characterized by both a look—low-key lighting, a predominance of night scenes, darkened, rain-splashed streets—and a feel—labyrinthine, psychologically convoluted narratives and characters—that perfectly captured the sense of alienation, fear, and fragility experienced by many in the postwar world, noir-style pictures had both cinematic and, especially, literary roots. Clearly resonant with pre-Code gangster films—in particular *The Public Enemy* and *Little Caesar*—noirs were also deeply indebted to the “hard-boiled pulp and pop fiction of James Cain (*Double Indemnity*, *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, and *Mildred Pierce*), Dashiell Hammett (*The Maltese Falcon* and *Red Harvest*), and Raymond Chandler (*Farewell, My Lovely* and *The Big Sleep*)” (Lewis, 2008). In addition, a number of film historians have also suggested that although it is not thematically oriented around crime and punishment, Orson Welles’ 1941 *Citizen Kane* nevertheless was instrumental in helping to lay the foundations for the noir pictures that would appear during the 1940s and 1950s (Kolker, 2000; Lewis, 2008; Schatz, 1981). *Citizen Kane*, says Robert Kolker in *A Cinema of Loneliness*, “altered the visual and narrative conventions of American film.” Indeed, says Kolker, “in the years immediately following it, the darkness of its *mise-en-scène* began to inform much of Hollywood’s output, particularly those films involving detectives, gangsters, and lower-middle-class men oppressed by lust and the sexuality of destructive women” (Kolker, 2000).

Drawing on pre-Code gangsters films, the work of their literary forbearers—some of whom wrote screenplays for noirs—and *Citizen Kane*, noirs provided audiences with multi-dimensional characters and narratives that often dealt with crime and punishment in intriguingly complex and modern ways. Unlike the one-dimensional criminal characters of 1930s gangster films, for example—“ethnic monsters” such as Rico Bandello in *Little Caesar* and Tom Powers in *The Public Enemy*, for whom their lives of crime seemed foregone conclusions long before they arrived to live them—most of the men who are caught up in extralegal activities in noirs are not “professional criminals.” Generally ordinary guys doing ordinary things—one thinks of Fred MacMurray’s Walter Neff in *Double Indemnity* (1944) (see: *Double Indemnity*), who sells insurance and stops off at the local bowling alley after work to relax, or of Alan Ladd’s Johnny Morrison in *The Blue Dahlia* (1946), who just wants to get on with his life after serving his country as a bomber pilot in the Pacific—these men are usually overwhelmed by incredibly beautiful, sexually available women—classic femme fatales—Barbara Stanwyck’s Phyllis Dietrichson to MacMurray’s Walter Neff and Veronica Lake’s Joyce Harwood to Ladd’s Johnny Morrison—who seduce them into departing

“from the boring reality of middle-class life into a fictive world of sexual pathology and illegal enterprise” (Lewis, 2008). Throughout the 1940s and 50s, then, film noirs “played on basic themes of aloneness, oppression, claustrophobia, and emotional and physical brutality, manifested in weak men, various gangsters and detectives, and devouring women who lived—or cringed—in an urban landscape that defied clear perception and safe habitation” (Kolker, 2000).

HUAC, the Hollywood Blacklist, and Resistance to Censorship

As film historians have pointed out, gender-bending characterizations of noir men and women—the anxiety-ridden males, so different from the heroic men who populated scores of genre westerns and combat pictures, and the dangerously aggressive females who represented perversely attractive obverses to the loyal, demure women of the majority of Hollywood films—were so pervasive in these pictures “that they must have been responses to some profound, if unconscious, shifts in the way the culture was seeing itself” during the 1940s and early ’50s:

Perhaps it was a response to the deep trauma of fascism, a brutality so profound that the culture had to deal with it, in part, through representations of lesser, more knowable and contained brutalities and helplessness. Perhaps the vicious noir woman was somehow a response to the fears of returning soldiers that the sweethearts they left at home were busy betraying them—or even more terrifying, successfully working at their jobs? . . . Perhaps she was a more general representation of the misogyny particularly rampant in the culture and its films after the war, or a dialectic response to this misogyny in the figure of women who would free themselves from the restraints of the domesticity portrayed as normal in so many films. (Kolker, 2000)

While noirs offered viewers little in the way of fear reducing redemption—by picture’s end both the fatal female and the wayward male were usually dead—the postwar combat pictures that were released during the 1940s and ’50s seemed wholly redemptive. Reflective in their own way of the shifts in how American culture was seeing itself after the end of the war—although in radically different ways than were noirs—the combat pictures that audiences viewed during the 1940s and 50s provided comfort, at least temporarily, from the specter of Cold War communism.

Much as it had been after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, communism was blamed for almost everything that was wrong in America during the Cold War years: labor unrest, racial tension, gender problems, and a host of other issues. In response to the threat of communism, a congressional committee was formed in 1946 to investigate “un-American activities.” The committee eventually came to be known as the House Un-American Activities Committee, or HUAC (**see: HUAC Hearings, The**), and between 1947 and 1954 it called witnesses from the film industry to testify about Communist influence in Hollywood. The committee initially called a number of “friendly witnesses,” prominent among them Walt Disney, Jack Warner, and Ronald Reagan. Unable to get these men to “name names,” the committee then called a second group of witnesses, a number of whom—notably Elia Kazan and Roy Huggins—

agreed to cooperate with the members of HUAC. Ten of those who would not cooperate—nine screenwriters and the director Edward Dmytryk, who had made *Crossfire* in 1947, a film that drew the attention of committee members—were eventually dubbed the Hollywood Ten.

The first official Hollywood blacklist was instituted on November 25, 1947, the day after the 10 men of the group were cited for contempt (**see: Hollywood Blacklist, The**). In a press release issued a week later by Eric Johnston, then head of the Motion Picture Association of America, 48 of the most powerful studio heads in the industry stated that they “deplore[d] the actions of the 10 Hollywood men who have been cited for contempt by the House of Representatives.” Although they claimed that they did not “desire to prejudge their legal rights,” they nevertheless declared that they had no choice but to “forthwith discharge or suspend without compensation” each member of the “10 until such time as he is acquitted or has purged himself of contempt and declares under oath that he is not a Communist.” All of the members of the group were ultimately fined and jailed for their refusal to bow to the dictates of Congress and industry heads.

The HUAC hearings and the institution of the Hollywood blacklist had a chilling effect on the film industry. Although most industry figures had nothing to do with communism, and those that did were guilty of no legal wrongdoing, hundreds from the filmmaking community were eventually blacklisted. Anticommunist fears were only exacerbated when Joseph McCarthy, a Republican senator from Wisconsin, came to prominence after giving a speech in February 1950 in which he claimed that he had the names of over 200 communist spies who had infiltrated the federal government. Although McCarthy was discredited and ultimately censored by his congressional colleagues, the fear he inspired remained palpable until 1954.

The Hollywood blacklist remained in place until 1960, and had lingering effects even after that. Unable to get work, many of those who refused to cooperate with the HUAC investigations lost everything they had worked so hard to attain. Interestingly, because they were able to work behind the scenes, some screenwriters were able to hire “ghosts” to front for them, notably Dalton Trumbo, whose script for *The Brave One* (1956) won an Academy Award. Not surprisingly, the situation divided the filmmaking community, with those who were blacklisted accusing those who had named names of betraying their colleagues simply so they could continue working. Without question the most celebrated figure who chose to cooperate was Elia Kazan. Ironically, Kazan had directed progressive stage productions before making his way to Hollywood, a number of which were produced by the Group Theatre, which was eventually targeted by HUAC in the late 1940s. When he began working in Hollywood, he was praised for producing socially relevant films such as *Gentlemen’s Agreement* (**see: Judaism in Film**), an indictment of anti-Semitism for which he won his first Oscar for direction, and *Pinky*, which examined the issue of a light-skinned African American woman who “passes” in the white community (**see: African Americans in Film**)—because the latter picture dealt so openly with race and miscegenation, it was actually banned in many areas of the South. In 1948, Kazan founded the Actors Studio, where some of Hollywood’s leading “method actors” of the 1950s—Marlon Brando, Montgomery

Clift, Eli Wallach, Kim Hunter, Eva Marie Saint—studied (**see: Method Acting**). In 1951, before he was called to testify before the HUAC committee, he directed *A Streetcar Named Desire*, which featured a brooding, existentially fragile Marlon Brando as Stanley Kowalski.

Kazan's testimony before HUAC was met with a great deal of criticism from his industry colleagues. He responded with the "trenchant blacklist allegory" *On the Waterfront*, which also starred Brando. Despite portraying itself as a populist celebration of the common man—Brando as the physically and psychologically bruised and battered Terry Malloy, who stands up for himself and his fellow dockworkers against the mob—*On the Waterfront* is really a "deeply reactionary film, as it implausibly celebrates the nobility of naming names" (Lewis, 2008). Kazan would go on to make some of most highly regarded films ever to come out of Hollywood during his post-HUAC career, including *East of Eden* (1955), which starred another method actor phenomenon, James Dean; *Baby Doll* (1957); *A Face in the Crowd* (1957); and *Splendor in the Grass* (1961), which Warren Beatty credited with launching his career. When Kazan was honored in 1999 with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Motion Picture Academy, though, many in Hollywood refused to celebrate the renowned director, demonstrating how controversial the whole sordid situation had been—and continued to be 50 years later.

The Decline of Production Code Censorship

While the imposition of the MPPDA's Production Code and the HUAC purges hit Hollywood hard, the industry also faced threats from other problematic sources. In 1948, the U.S. Supreme Court weighed in on the issue of violation of antitrust laws by Hollywood studios, who were accused of creating a market monopoly that limited the possibility of competition in the filmmaking industry. The Supreme Court had made its voice heard early on in American film history, deciding in the 1915 *Mutual* case that although plays and novels were protected by the First Amendment right of free speech, films were not—the thinking being that those who watched plays and read novels were sufficiently sophisticated not to be negatively affected by what they consumed, while those who watched films—the uneducated masses—were not. The *Paramount* case of 1948—so named because Paramount was the first studio listed in the suit, the others being RKO, Warner Bros., Twentieth Century-Fox, Loew's-MGM, Columbia, Universal, and United Artists—was decided against the studios. Deemed trusts by the Court, the studios were forced to divest themselves of their extraordinarily profitable theater chains—in major cities, the studios controlled as much as 70 percent of first-run theaters. The decision had an immediate effect on the studios, whose revenues plummeted during the late 1940s and early 1950s.

Ironically, in writing the majority opinion in the *Paramount* case, Justice William O. Douglas, a staunch civil libertarian, took the time to revisit the *Mutual* case of 1915, declaring that the decision violated the rights of filmmakers. The practice of punishing theater owners with fines if they exhibited films that did not bear the PCA

stamp rendering them appropriate for viewing, wrote Douglas, was unconstitutional. Although the Hays Code remained very much in effect until the mid-1950s, this loosening of free speech restrictions was at least a step toward the more radical filmmaking that characterized the late 1950s and 1960s.

Interestingly, the decline in revenues that resulted from the *Paramount* decision, exacerbated by the increasing popularity of television, which kept potential moviegoers at home, led to attempts by certain filmmakers to defy the PCA and to make pictures that would bring audiences back to the theaters. One of those filmmakers was the Eastern European émigré Otto Preminger, who had already made a number of commercially successful films in America, including the early offering *Laura* (1944). Preminger raised eyebrows in 1952 when he purchased the rights to a stage play that had garnered a reputation as a rather risqué Broadway comedy, *The Moon Is Blue*. Thrilled at the thought of adapting the play and making it into a motion picture, Preminger signed William Holden and David Niven to star. When PCA head Joseph Breen got wind of the fact that Preminger was going forward with the production, he contacted him and informed the director that he had seen the play on Broadway and that it was wholly inappropriate. Preminger was undaunted by what he considered the threat from the PCA and signed a distribution deal with United Artists. Assuming that the lack of a PCA stamp would be the kiss of death, Preminger, and a great many others in Hollywood, was pleasantly surprised when *The Moon Is Blue* went on to gross over \$4 million in its initial release.

Buoyed by the success of *The Moon Is Blue*, Preminger decided that he wanted to adapt a hard-hitting novel by Nelson Algren, *The Man with the Golden Arm*, whose antiheroic protagonist suffers from unchecked ambition and drug addiction. Although Joseph Breen had by this time been replaced as head of the PCA by the more liberal Geoffrey Shurlock, who understood the desire of Hollywood filmmakers to produce edgier and more complex films, *The Man with the Golden Arm* (1955) seemed so far beyond the Production Code pale that Shurlock advised Preminger not to go forward with the project. Ignoring Shurlock's warning, Preminger signed Frank Sinatra to play the luckless protagonist Frankie Machine, and once again signed a distribution deal with United Artists. The film went on to become a major box office hit, and Sinatra earned an Oscar nomination for Best Actor for his performance.

In addition to the adult-themed movies that were made at this time, the industry also began to make what came to be known as "teen films," which pushed against the boundaries of the Production Code. Marketed to a newly minted group of consumers, teen films exposed the troubled—and troubling—lifestyles of America's disaffected adolescents and young adults, who, much to the surprise of their parents and the nation's leaders, did not feel part of the postwar "affluent society." The first financially successful teen film, *The Wild One* (1953), starred Marlon Brando as the leader of a motorcycle gang that terrifies the hapless citizens of a town in rural America. Directed by László Benedek, the picture was part narrative film, part documentary, as it was loosely based on the experience of townspeople in Hollister, California. Although the picture seemed frightening to average, upright Americans who were terrified that their ordinary, peaceful lives could be disrupted in this way, it was, in the end, Production

Code friendly, as the motorcycle toughs, who were seen as wholly different from typical teenagers, ultimately get what they deserve.

The same cannot be said of Richard Brooks's cautionary 1955 tale *The Blackboard Jungle*, which was banned in certain American cities—in Memphis it was characterized as antisocial—and pulled from the Venice Film Festival by the State Department, which described it as anti-American. What was, perhaps, most unsettling about the film was that it was set in an American high school, the kind of place, parents had always hoped, that could provide a safe and secure refuge for their adolescent children while they learned how to be good citizens. In the “blackboard jungle,” however, typical teens turn out to be juvenile delinquents who terrorize their teacher and each other. The teacher, Mr. Dadier (played by Glenn Ford), even after he is accosted by some of his students, takes the side of the kids, hoping to guide them, in the manner of Sidney Poitier in *To Sir with Love*, along the right path. The task proves a difficult one, and it takes the actions of a marginalized student (Jamie Farr), who runs the class bully (Vic Morrow) through with a flagpole, to set things right. Even though an American flag hangs from the flagpole—a suitable postwar image of American virtue—and the film ends with the progressive message that the nation's educational system can, indeed, be there for its kids, the picture proved disturbing to many.

Also appearing in 1955, Nicholas Ray's *Rebel Without a Cause* proved even less comforting than *The Blackboard Jungle* (see: **Rebel Without a Cause**). Starring James Dean, the picture follows teens who, it seems, live their lives devoid of parental supervision. Driven by the extraordinarily powerful performance of Dean, it may be argued that the picture is framed by its most recognizable set piece, the so-called chicken run where young men race their cars toward the edge of an abyss daring each other not to turn “chicken” and jump from their vehicle before it plunges over the precipice. When the Dean character Jim asks his antagonist Buzz (Corey Allen) why they do it, Buzz gives expression to the alienation that all the teens in the film seem to experience when he quickly responds: “You gotta do something, don't you?” The film, still extremely popular today, was seen by many as a “wake-up call, a warning to parents, even wealthy white parents living in posh suburbs, to start listening to their kids, to start taking care of them” (Lewis, 2008).

A New Production Code and the Rise of Contemporary Auteurs

Convinced that American audiences wanted more mature films, and that the studios were going to make them regardless of PCA objections, Shurlock, with the support of Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) president Eric Johnson, decided that the censorship code in Hollywood had to be changed. Realizing that the 1930s Production Code was prohibitive because it forced filmmakers to make motion pictures that were effectively “one-size-fits-all” offerings, the MPAA sought to put in place a code that would allow not only family-oriented films to be made, but also films with mature themes, such as *The Man with the Golden Arm* and *Rebel Without a Cause*. What can be considered the filmic test case came in 1966, when Warner Bros. decided

to release Mike Nichols's provocative adaptation of Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (**see: Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?**).

Nichols was among the second generation of American directors that were considered *auteur* filmmakers—"authors" of their films (**see: Auteur Theory**). Imported to America by film scholar and critic Andrew Sarris (**see: Sarris, Andrew**), auteur theory had been labeled *La politique des auteurs* in the 1950s by French film critics André Bazin, Erich Rohmer, Jean-Luc Godard, Jacques Rivette, and François Truffaut—the last four also directors—in the avant garde film journal *Cahiers du cinéma*. It was adopted in the United States during the early 1960s. Although Sarris certainly understood that filmmaking was a collaborative process, he argued that directors—at least certain directors—were the figures who provided what the *Cahiers* critics understood as cinematic authorship to motion pictures. In his article entitled "Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962," Sarris identified directors such as D. W. Griffith, Charlie Chaplin, John Ford, Alfred Hitchcock, and Orson Welles as auteurs. Griffith and Chaplin had emerged during the silent era and had crossed over into the sound era. The latter three directors were still making important and entertaining films during the 1950s and 60s, when things were changing so radically in Hollywood, and all continued to work into the 1970s and later—Ford's genre-breaking westerns *The Searchers* and *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* were released in 1956 and 1962, respectively (**see: Searchers, The; Man Who Shot Liberty Valance, The**); Welles's self-conscious noir thriller *Touch of Evil* (**see: Touch of Evil**) in 1958; and Hitchcock's *Rear Window*, *Vertigo*, and *Psycho* in 1954, 1958, and 1960, respectively (**see: Vertigo; Psycho**).

Directors like Ford, Hitchcock, and Welles had a powerful effect on the next generation of American filmmakers, figures such as Nichols, Arthur Penn, Stanley Kubrick, Francis Ford Coppola, Martin Scorsese, Oliver Stone, Robert Altman, and Woody Allen. In regard to Nichols, by the time he made his film adaptation of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, the MPAA had chosen Jack Valenti as its next president, and it would be Valenti who would have to deal with the question of whether or not this explosive film would be released. Starring Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton as Martha and George, a bitter, spiteful husband and wife—Taylor and Burton were real-life mates who shared their own tempestuous relationship—the film made Valenti uncomfortable. Reluctant to censor the picture, however, Valenti compromised with Warner Bros.—the word "screw" was removed from the dialogue, while "hump the hostess" stayed in. Hired to rethink the Production Code such that some form of it could be kept in place while still allowing for films such as *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* to be made, Valenti hit on an initial solution that moved things in the right direction. *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* would be released with a PCA exemption if Warner Bros. agreed to label it "For Mature Audiences Only," leaving the decision to exhibit it to the nation's theater owners. Effectively creating a trial run for a multirating coding system, Warner Bros., Nichols, and the rest of the industry waited anxiously to see how the film would fare at the box office. They need not have worried, as *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* ended up grossing over \$10 million by the end of 1966, finishing third behind two other mature-themed pictures, the James Bond thriller *Thunderball* and the historical epic *Dr. Zhivago*.

Although Valenti sought to calm fears that the PCA's decision to give *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* an exemption was not the end of cinematic censorship altogether, for all intents and purposes, at least as far as the old notion of the Production Code was concerned, it was. In 1966 alone, six more films received the MPAA's rating of For Mature Audiences Only, with *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* receiving its own special designation: no person under 18 admitted unless accompanied by a parent. The floodgates had now been opened, and by 1967 the number of For Mature Audiences Only pictures had increased to 67.

The possibility of making more mature films provided the opportunity for two of America's most important films to be made in 1967, Nichols's follow-up to *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, *The Graduate*, and Arthur Penn's *Bonnie and Clyde*. Both films shocked and moved audiences, the first with its unflinching examination of upper-middle-class banality, alienation, and sexuality, the second with its exploration of human degradation, fragility, and violence (**see: Graduate, The; Bonnie and Clyde**). Reacting to what by now was understood to be inevitable, Valenti issued a press release in October 1968 in which he announced that a new rating system for motion pictures had been put in place: G, suggested for "General Audiences"; M, suggested for "Mature" audiences; R, "Restricted," no one under 16 admitted unless accompanied by a parent or adult guardian; X, no one under 16 admitted. Pictures that received a G, M, or R rating would be given MPAA seals; those that received X ratings would not. Valenti's rating system was quickly adopted, and a Code and Rating Administration (CARA) was established to determine which pictures would receive which rating. At this point, the question of whether or not what had once been considered pictures in violation of the Production Code would be made had been resolved—they would. The only question now was whether or not directors wanted to risk having their pictures labeled with a more restrictive rating by choosing to include scenes that were considered too provocative by CARA.

Realizing that provocative—even pornographic—pictures could still make money, most directors pushed the limits of the rating system, some almost to the breaking point. Non-mainstream, pornographic films such as Gerard Damiano's *Deep Throat* (1972) and *The Devil in Miss Jones* (1973), and Jim and Artie Mitchell's *Behind the Green Door* (1972), although they were rated X and were released without the MPAA seal, proved remarkably popular, out-earning all but a few of the highest-grossing mainstream pictures—they also made household names of "actors" such as Linda Lovelace and Harry Reems. Most directors—along with their studios—were unwilling to risk an X rating, however, and thus, they reluctantly pulled scenes whose language, or depictions of sexuality and/or violence, would push them beyond the R rating. John Schlesinger's 1969 release *Midnight Cowboy* was an exception, becoming the first and only X-rated film to earn an Academy Award nomination for Best Picture. Another startling 1969 offering was the Dennis Hopper/Peter Fonda picture *Easy Rider*. Produced independently, and made for just \$375,000, it grossed an amazing \$19 million in its initial 1969 release, proving that there was a tremendously lucrative youth market just waiting to be tapped—it also made clear that an influential counterculture had developed in America during the tumultuous 1960s.

Second-generation auteurs continued to make significant films throughout the 1960s and '70s. Penn, for instance, followed *Bonnie and Clyde* with his own genre-breaking western, *Little Big Man* (1970)—an anti-Vietnam War exposé that made its point by way of an exploration of the tragic implications of nineteenth-century colonialism and the ideology of manifest destiny—while Nichols continued to build his reputation after *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and *The Graduate* with *Catch-22* (1970) and *Carnal Knowledge* (1971)—the latter an R-rated film that flirted with an X rating. Excited by the success of *Easy Rider*, studio heads at Warner Bros. gave Francis Ford Coppola, a little-known figure in Hollywood at the time, \$600,000 to develop youth-oriented projects. Coppola set himself up in San Francisco, gathered around him a group of young filmmakers, and got to work. A year later, he pitched four ideas to Warner Bros., none of which sounded to studio heads remotely like *Easy Rider*. The studio rejected all four ideas—much to their regret, as it turned out, as the four proposed projects were ultimately developed into George Lucas's dystopian sci-fi offering *THX 1138* and his teen hit *American Graffiti* and Coppola's own *Apocalypse Now* and *The Conversation*.

Supporting himself by making technical films and television commercials, Coppola got the break for which he was waiting when he was brought on to help write the screenplay for the big budget war film *Patton* (1970). The co-written script that Coppola produced won him his first Oscar (shared with Edmund North); it also duly impressed studio heads at Paramount, who turned to Coppola to direct their own big-budget film, *The Godfather* (**see: Godfather Trilogy, The**). Although it seems an extraordinary gamble to have placed such an important project in the hands of a neophyte director like Coppola, in a certain sense the studio had little choice, as it had been turned down by an exhaustive list of Hollywood's best directors—Richard Brooks, Kazan, Penn, and Fred Zinnemann among them. As it turned out, though, Paramount could not have made a better choice, as Coppola produced a grand, glossy, sweeping epic about gangsters in America. Powerfully acted and exquisitely shot, *The Godfather* won numerous awards and broke records for box-office grosses that had stood for three decades—on a budget of only \$6 million it took in \$80 million in its initial release and has probably earned over \$250 million if re-releases are included.

A nation away from the California-based Coppola, another Italian American director, Martin Scorsese, was making a different kind of gangster film. Unlike *The Godfather*, which relates the story of mobsters who are almost transcendently powerful, Scorsese's *Mean Streets*—released the year after Coppola's picture—follows the lives of a group of neighborhood gangsters in New York City who often seem befuddled by the demands of their criminal careers. Compared with *The Godfather*, which co-starred a young Al Pacino, *Mean Streets*, which co-starred a young Robert De Niro, is a small, spare picture. Interestingly, De Niro would go on to co-star in *The Godfather, Part II* and to make a series of pictures with Scorsese, including *Taxi Driver* (1976) and *Raging Bull* (1980) and Scorsese's own glossy gangster films, *Goodfellas* (1990) and *Casino* (1995).

Oddly enough, Stanley Kubrick, who is most often included in the list of second-generation auteur directors, had made nine feature films by the time *The Godfather*

and *Mean Streets* were released in the early 1970s—among them, two antiwar films, *Paths of Glory* (1957) and *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1964); a period epic, *Spartacus* (1960); the philosophically surreal sci-fi pic *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968); and the ultraviolent exploration of societal control, *A Clockwork Orange* (1971). Although he was only in his early forties, and one of the most highly regarded American directors in the industry, he would only make four more films after 1971: another period piece, *Barry Lyndon* (1975); the horror film *The Shining* (1980); the post-Vietnam antiwar film *Full Metal Jacket* (1987); and the erotic melodrama/thriller *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999), on which he was working at the time of his death. Yet, even though his body of work is quite small compared to his much more prolific colleagues, Kubrick demonstrated a certain filmmaking genius, producing what are considered some of the best films in a number of different genres.

Like Coppola and Kubrick, Oliver Stone and Robert Altman also produced antiwar films. Stone would follow Michael Cimino's *The Deer Hunter*, Hal Ashby's *Coming Home*, and Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* (1979), with a Vietnam trilogy: *Platoon* (1986), *Born on the Fourth of July* (1989), and *Heaven and Earth* (1993). He would also become one of the nation's most controversial directors as a result of the questions he raised concerning historical veracity and poetic license in films such as *JFK* and *Nixon*. For his part, Altman made his antiwar film, *M*A*S*H** while Vietnam still raged. Set in a mobile army surgical hospital in Korea, the film, with its ultrarealistic depiction of the blood and guts of wartime medicine, was a thinly veiled statement about the tragic loss of life and profound alienation caused by the Vietnam War. Altman also added to the list of genre-breaking westerns—which would eventually include not only Ford's *The Searchers* and *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* and Penn's *Little Big Man*, but also Sam Peckinpah's *The Wild Bunch* (1969), George Roy Hill's *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969), Kevin Costner's *Dances with Wolves* (1990), and Clint Eastwood's *Unforgiven* (1992)—with the ethereal *McCabe and Mrs. Miller* (1971) (see: **Wild Bunch, The; Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid; Dances with Wolves; Unforgiven; McCabe and Mrs. Miller**).

Although the second-generation auteurs largely involved themselves in making dramatic films, Woody Allen (see: **Allen, Woody**) built his career writing, directing, and usually starring in spoofs and mature-themed comedies. Much like Charlie Chaplin literally turned himself into the antiheroic Little Tramp in numerous silent and early sound era productions, during the second half of the twentieth century, Allen embodied the figure of a quirky, hapless, lovable antihero in a series of contemporary films. In the first of these, *Take the Money and Run* (1969), he plays the would-be crook Virgil Starkwell—the name, it appears, a play on Charlie Starkweather, the notorious mass murderer whose brutal crime spree, much of it carried out with his girlfriend Caril Ann Fugate, inspired the films *Badlands* (1973) and *Natural Born Killers* (1994). Unlike Starkweather, though, Virgil is a bumbling criminal who seems hardly able to get out of his own way, a characterization that Allen would adopt and refine in cultural spoofs such as *Bananas* (1971), *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Sex* (1972), *Sleeper* (1973), and *Love and Death* (1975). In 1977, with *Annie Hall*, Allen shifted his filmic emphasis from the realm of cultural satire to that of autobiographical

existential inquiry. Still playing an antiheroic lovable loser, Alvy Singer in this case, Allen starred opposite Diane Keaton, who played the eponymous Annie. The film, which garnered Oscars for Best Picture, Directing, Writing, and Best Actress for Keaton, made Allen a household name; after the dark, brooding *Interiors* (1978), made as an homage to director Ingmar Bergman, Allen again struck gold in 1979 with *Manhattan*, another autobiographical comedy. He continues to make movies today, occupying, along with certain of his filmmaking colleagues, the rarefied space of the auteur.

The New Hollywood: Race and African Americans in Film

Although better known as a writer, another comedian who, like Allen, made the transition to directing pictures for the big screen was Mel Brooks. After writing for Sid Caesar's *Your Show of Shows* and other prime-time television shows during the 1950s, Brooks made *The Producers* in 1968 and *Blazing Saddles* in 1974. Both, and especially the latter, were "crude, lewd, and outrageous," and set the stage for other prurient, lowbrow comedies—*Animal House* (1978), *Dumb and Dumber* (1994), and *There's Something About Mary* (1998) come to mind. *The Producers*, as it turned out, would be adapted from the screen to the stage by Brooks and Thomas Meehan, and would go on to have successful runs on Broadway. *Blazing Saddles*, a tasteless offering that played to the basest instincts of adolescent males from 15 to 50, had little to recommend it—a farting contest among cowboys huddled around a campfire was touted as a highlight—except for the fact that it teamed Brooks's stalwart Gene Wilder with African American co-star Cleavon Little and, at least on one level, attempted to speak to serious questions concerning black/white race relations in America.

Depictions of people of color in American films have, unfortunately, overwhelmingly reflected the racist attitudes that have haunted the nation since its beginnings during the late eighteenth-century (see: **African Americans in Film; Native Americans in Film; Ethnic and Immigrant Culture Cinema**). In landmark American films such as Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) and Victor Fleming's *Gone with the Wind* (1939) (see: **Gone with the Wind**), for instance, African Americans—who were played by whites in blackface in Griffith's picture—were portrayed on screen as embodiments of nineteenth-century minstrel stereotypes: the "Mammy," "Zipcoon," the "Uncle," the "Sambo," the "Pickaninny," the "Black Buck." These extraordinarily destructive images of African Americans appeared in countless pictures throughout the twentieth century—and, it may be argued, are still seen in twenty-first-century pictures—influencing the way that hundreds of thousands of film viewers saw African Americans. Beyond non-genre pictures such as *The Birth of a Nation* and *Gone with the Wind*, genre westerns and war films were every bit as damaging, depicting Native Americans, Mexicans—both of which, like African Americans in film, were often played by whites—Cubans, Filipinos, Germans, the Japanese, Koreans, the Vietnamese, and Arabs as nameless, faceless, savages who wanted nothing more than to kill Americans and destroy the nation's Christian-Democratic foundations (see: **War Film, The; Western, The; Native Americans in Film**).

In addition to starring with Cleavon Little in *Blazing Saddles*, Gene Wilder would also star in a number of pictures with the talented African American stand-up comic Richard Pryor—*Stir Crazy* (1980) is an example. Although Pryor was really at his best onstage—he made a string of acclaimed concert films, such as *Richard Pryor: Live in Concert* (1979) and *Richard Pryor: Live and Smokin'*—he was nevertheless featured in a number of film comedies—*Uptown Saturday Night* (1974), for instance, with fellow African American comedians Flip Wilson and Bill Cosby, and *Car Wash* (1976); one of his most poignant roles was as “Piano Man,” in the dramatic biopic *Lady Sings the Blues* (1972), opposite Diana Ross and Billy Dee Williams.

Significantly, *Uptown Saturday Night* and *Stir Crazy* were both directed by Sidney Poitier, who had become one of America’s most well-known, highly regarded, and bankable stars during the 1960s. Poitier had begun making motion pictures in the 1950s, but had broken through with his starring role as Walter Lee Younger in *A Raisin in the Sun* in 1961. In 1967, he would make three powerful pictures, *To Sir with Love*, *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner*, and *In the Heat of the Night*—the latter two films were both nominated for Best Picture Oscars in 1968, with *In the Heat of the Night* taking the honor. While all three of these films raised important questions about black/white race relations in America, some in the African American community criticized them—and Poitier’s appearance in them—as accommodationist, all of them, it was argued, depicting their protagonist as a black man who could be safely assimilated into the white community. Given this criticism, it is interesting to note that Poitier would help to initiate another movement in black cinema, “blaxploitation,” a “term that affirms the anticipated (black American) audience and celebrates the genre’s production style and marketing scheme (exploitation)” (Lewis, 2008).

Although he would act in blaxploitation pictures, Poitier’s role as an initiator of the movement would come as a director, when he stepped behind the camera to helm *Buck and the Preacher* in 1972. Black directors had largely been prevented from making films during the early years of American cinema, although Oscar Micheaux distinguished himself as both a director and a producer during the silent and early sound eras, making a series of what were called “race movies” in the 1920s and 1930s. Later, African American filmmakers such as Melvin Van Peebles, Ossie Davis, and Ivan Dixon would challenge audiences with 1970s blaxploitation offerings—Van Peebles’s *Sweet Sweetback’s Baadasssss Song* (1971) and *Watermelon Man* (1971), for instance, along with Davis’s *Cotton Comes to Harlem* (1970), and Dixon’s *The Spook Who Sat by the Door* (1973). Perhaps the two most important Blaxploitation pictures, though, were Gordon Parks’s *Shaft* (1971), which starred Richard Roundtree as the ultracool, seemingly invincible detective John Shaft, and Gordon Parks Jr.’s *Super Fly*, which blended filmic images with the music of Curtis Mayfield to create an unsettling examination of drug lords and the degradation of lower-class black neighborhoods.

Besides being powerful tropological pieces in their own right, *Shaft* and *Super Fly* also provided the prototypic framework for female blaxploitation pictures, such as *Cleopatra Jones* (1973), *Three the Hard Way* (1974, directed by Parks Jr.), and *Foxy Brown* (1974). The first of these starred Tamara Dobson as a secret agent, while the latter two featured Pam Grier playing ultraviolent populist saviors (**see: Grier, Pam**).

Together with the other Blaxploitation pictures of the early 1970s, films like these pointed the way toward latter-day comedy-dramas such as *48 Hours* (1982) and *Beverly Hills Cop* (1984), both of which starred notable stand-up comic Eddie Murphy. Intriguingly, they would also influence white directors such as Quentin Tarantino, who produced his self-proclaimed blaxploitation offering *Jackie Brown*—which featured Grier—in 1997.

The directorial efforts of African American filmmakers like Micheaux, Poitier, Van Peebles, Davis, and the Parks, laid the cinematic foundation for latter-day figures such as Spike Lee. Lee became a popular and highly respected director—many have characterized him as an auteur—by making hard-hitting films that addressed black/white race relations in America and that were viewed by both black and white audiences. Although he had already been working in the film industry, Lee first became recognizable to white audiences by way of a series of innovative Nike ads—which featured the basketball superstar Michael Jordan—in which he developed the enigmatic character of Mars Blackmon. Lee had brought Mars Blackmon to life in his first feature film directorial effort, *She's Gotta Have It* (1986). Although the picture focused on the loves and losses of Nola Darling (Tracy Camilla Johns), Lee stole the show with his performance as Blackmon. In his Nike commercials, Lee further satirized the self-consciously stereotypical Blackmon—in a way that few whites, who unknowingly laughed at Lee's buffoonish actions, seemed to understand.

The Nike commercials made him famous, and the ambitious Lee made the most of it, negotiating a deal with Universal to direct *Do the Right Thing* (1989), a “big studio film that deals unflinchingly with racial conflict in urban America” (Lewis, 2008). Although to some a problematic choice, after the success of *Do the Right Thing* Lee was tapped to make the big-budget studio film *Malcolm X* (1992). Adapted from *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, the film starred Denzel Washington as the controversial civil rights leader who was assassinated in 1965. Washington's enormously powerful performance would earn him his first Best Actor Academy Award nomination—although he lost for *Malcolm X*, the gifted actor would become the first African American to win a Best Actor Oscar, for his brutally intense performance as Detective Alonzo Harris in *Training Day* (2001). Lee and Washington would go on to make a number of other films together after *Malcolm X*, including *He Got Game* (1998) and *Inside Man* (2006). Lee's work, although not as popular as it once was, has influenced a host of talented African American directors, including Rusty Cundieff, Vondie Curtis-Hall, Carl Franklin, Albert and Allen Hughes, David Johnson, Darnell Martin, and John Singleton.

The New Hollywood: The Question of Gender

While women have been prominent figures in the film industry since its inception, they have consistently been restricted from filling positions of power in the field. Forced to the cinematic margins by powerful men who have worked particularly hard to put and to keep the industry's patriarchal structure in place, women have been objectified on-screen while being prevented from making decisions about how motion pictures are made. As film historian Robert Sklar points out in his *World History of*

Film, “less than a handful of women directors who worked before the 1980s have been talked about, even by specialists—Alice Guy-Blaché for the early years, Lois Weber after World War I, Dorothy Arzner in the 1930s, Ida Lupino after World War II—although there were considerably more.” While women screenwriters fared somewhat better in the first few decades of American filmmaking, this only “makes more clear the fate of women directors until recently: when a job took on prestige or became high-paying, women were frequently shunted aside” (Sklar, 2002).

By the time she made her way to America, Alice Guy had made 180 films for the Gaumont Company in France. Having been hired by Léon Gaumont as a secretary for his fledgling film company, she was made head of production in 1896, making scores of motion pictures over the next decade, culminating with *The Life of Christ* in 1906, a project on which as many as 300 extras worked. Guy married Herbert Blaché in 1907, after which she was known as Guy-Blaché. When Herbert was appointed production manager of Gaumont’s U.S. operations, he and Alice emigrated from France and began work in America. By 1910, they had formed an independent film company, Solax, which Alice headed until 1920.

Although most of the work that she produced in America has been destroyed, the film for which Guy-Blaché is probably best known, *The Making of an American Citizen*, is still available. Dealing with issues of immigration and domestic violence, it is a surprisingly modern film. With films such as *The Making of an American Citizen*, Guy-Blaché paved the way for women filmmakers in America during the 1910s, which turned out to be a particularly fertile time for female directors. By 1916, for instance, Universal had seven female directors under contract: Ruth Ann Baldwin, Grace Cunard, Clio Madison, Ida May Park, Ruth Stonehouse, Elise Jane Weber, and Lois Weber. Of these women, Lois Weber had the biggest impact on American filmmaking.

Interestingly Weber began her filmmaking career in 1905, when she went to work for Gaumont (**see: Weber, Lois**). After marrying Phillip Smalley in 1906, she left her public life to become a homemaker, returning to the industry in 1911 when she and Smalley took over the Rex Film Company from Edwin S. Porter. Hired by Universal, she ultimately became the studio’s highest-paid director—a distinction she earned by producing profitable films such as *Where Are My Children?* (1916). After establishing her own production company in 1917, she signed a lucrative contract with Famous Players-Lasky, earning a remarkable \$50,000 per film.

Like Guy-Blaché, Weber made films that were socially relevant. *The People vs. John Doe* (1916), for instance, dealt with capital punishment, while *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle* (1917) explored the life of controversial birth control advocate Margaret Sanger, and *Shoes* (1916) sought to expose the problematic issue of unequal pay for women. Understanding herself as a political evangelist, and cinema as the tool by which she could make her message heard, Weber made what many consider her masterpiece in 1921, *The Blot*. A statement about what Weber felt were the disturbing implications of capitalism, *The Blot* dealt with the struggles of a proud but poor family that is desperately trying to avoid taking charity in order to survive.

While Weber’s pictures proved popular during the height of the Progressive Era, they fell out of favor during the conservative 1920s—in 1923 she was forced to return

to making films for Universal. This fall from grace, it seems, was connected to a general backlash against women who, during the 1910s, were becoming increasingly vocal advocates for women's rights. Although unsettling, it is not surprising that in the very moment that women like Guy-Blaché and Weber were making films that expressed progressive sensibilities, the industry was literally creating the persona of Theda Bara and casting her in "vamp" pictures like *The Stain* (1914), *A Fool There Was* (1915), *The Devil's Daughter* (1915), *When a Woman Sins* (1918), and *The Siren's Song* (1919). Ironically, although the women that Bara portrayed on screen possessed their own forms of power—they were able to seduce men into doing anything they wanted them to do—they actually seemed less menacing to the men who controlled the film industry than did women like Guy-Blaché and Weber, who threatened to bring down the entire patriarchal structure that had been so carefully erected (Lewis, 2008).

It is too neat an explanation to suggest that Dorothy Arzner was able to emerge on the filmmaking scene during the 1930s because the decade represented a return to the progressive ideals of the 1910s (see: **Arzner, Dorothy**). Indeed, although she did make the majority of her films during the New Deal era of the 1930s, she honed her craft during the 1920s, distinguishing herself by editing, writing, and ultimately directing films during this conservative decade. In 1929, Arzner made *The Wild Party*, a film that explored the decline and fall—and eventual redemption—of the college girl gone wrong, Stella Ames (Clara Bow), who is rescued from her fate by her staid professor (Fredric March). Although in many ways a formulaic melodrama, in Arzner's hands *The Wild Party* became more than that, raising questions about the implications of overweening morality and making judgments about people based only on appearances. Arzner would go on to direct pictures such as *Sarah and Son* (1930), *Christopher Strong* (1933), *Craig's Wife* (1936), and *Dance, Girl, Dance* (1940), working with talented actresses such as Ruth Chatterton, Katharine Hepburn, Rosalind Russell, and Maureen O'Hara.

Ida Lupino carved out a successful acting career during the 1930s and '40s, first in B pictures such as *Peter Ibbetson* (1935) and *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1939), and then in features such as *High Sierra* (1941) and *The Sea Wolf* (see: **Lupino, Ida**). She eventually won the New York Film Critics award for her work in *The Hard Way* (1942). Desiring to participate in other areas of filmmaking—she had a certain degree of success as a composer—she began to express interest during the mid-1940s in directing and producing motion pictures. In 1946, she worked behind the scenes as an uncredited co-producer on *War Widow*, and in 1948 she co-produced the low-budget thriller *The Judge*. In 1949, Lupino and television producer Anson Bond formed Emerald Productions, which was later renamed Filmmakers. When the man slated to direct Emerald's *Not Wanted* suffered a heart attack, she stepped in to complete the picture. Like the female directors who came before her, Lupino made socially topical pictures: *Not Wanted*, for instance, addressed unwed motherhood, while *Outrage* (1950) focused on rape, *Never Fear* (1949) on the effects of polio, and *Hard, Fast, and Beautiful* (1951) on the impact of a domineering mother on a young tennis player.

Although women continue to struggle to establish themselves as directors in Hollywood, figures such as Guy-Blaché, Lois Weber, Dorothy Arzner, and Ida Lupino

opened doors—at least a crack—for the talented female filmmakers who have followed them. Oddly, while the feminist movements of the 1960s and 1970s were helping American women to break through the nation's glass ceiling, in the film industry, men continued largely to prevent this from happening. Even though gifted editors such as Dede Allen and Thelma Schoonmaker (**see: Allen, Dede; Schoonmaker, Thelma**) and screenwriters such as Nora Ephron (**see: Ephron, Nora**), have left their very considerable marks on significant films—Allen, for example, edited *The Hustler* (1961), *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), *Little Big Man* (1970), *Serpico* (1973), *The Breakfast Club* (1985), *Wonder Boys* (2000), and *John Q* (2002) before her death in 2010; while Schoonmaker has edited every one of Martin Scorsese's films since she worked on *Raging Bull* (1980), including *Goodfellas* (1990), *Casino* (1995), *Gangs of New York*, (2002), *The Departed* (2006), and *Shutter Island* (2010); and Ephron wrote *Silkwood* (1983), *When Harry Met Sally* (1989), *Sleepless in Seattle* (1993), *You've Got Mail* (1998), and *Julie and Julia* (2009)—very few female directors have been given a chance to work on feature films.

A number of female directors did revive the teen films that were so popular in the 1950s, although they gave them a comedic twist and articulated the teenage angst expressed in them in very different ways. Amy Heckerling (**see: Heckerling, Amy**), for instance, gave us *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* (1982) and *Clueless* (1995), while Martha Coolidge provided *Valley Girl* (1983) and *Real Genius* (1985). Susan Seidelman, whose *Smithereens* (1982) was the first American independent film to be accepted in the prize competition at Cannes, made the adult-themed comedy *Desperately Seeking Susan* in 1985—with a newly minted pop star named Madonna. The multitalented Barbra Streisand (**see: Streisand, Barbra**) produced, co-wrote, starred in, and directed *Yentl* (1983), about a Jewish girl who pretends to be a boy so that she can get an education, and then produced, starred in, and directed *The Prince of Tides*. Having starred in the hit television sitcom *Laverne & Shirley* in the 1970s, Penny Marshall stepped behind the camera to stay in the 1980s, scoring a major hit with her second feature, *Big*. A child star who grew into a major movie star, Jodie Foster made the poignant *Little Man Tate* (1991) and the dystopian family comedy *Home for the Holidays* (1995). In 1993, Jane Campion made *The Piano*, which was heralded as a feminist anthem, and followed it with the controversial *In the Cut* in 2003, while Sofia Coppola, the daughter of Francis Ford Coppola, adapted Jeffrey Eugenides's novel *The Virgin Suicides* for the screen and went on to make the popular and critically acclaimed *Lost in Translation* in 2003.

Not surprisingly, the work produced by these women raised the same kinds of questions that had been raised about the work of Guy-Blaché, Weber, Arzner, and Lupino; most notably, were the films made by these directors simply “women's films,” or were they films that just happened to be made by women? Many men seemed unwilling to consider the latter, arguing, at least implicitly, that women should not be allowed behind the camera. Streisand, for instance, was accused of indulging her ego when she made *Yentl*, although as many critics, both women and men, pointed out, if a man had made the same kind of film, which a great many had, would he come under the same kind of attack? Members of the male-dominated Academy seemed to make

their position clear by nominating *The Prince of Tides* for the Best Picture Oscar while leaving Streisand off the list of those nominated for the award for Best Direction.

Although unfortunately things have not changed a great deal since the 1980s in regard to the place of female directors in Hollywood, perhaps what occurred with Kathryn Bigelow between 2008 and 2010 has at least begun to move things in the right direction. Having gone against the grain by making a series of testosterone-fueled action pictures early in her career—*Blue Steel* (1990), *Point Break* (1991), and *Strange Days* (1995)—Bigelow turned her attention to the Iraq War in 2008, when she made the character-driven indie film *The Hurt Locker*. Gaining an increasingly devoted fan base by way of word of mouth, the picture was ultimately nominated for a Best Picture Academy Award in 2010—and unlike Streisand, Bigelow was not left off the list of Best Director nominees.

When the nominees were announced, it seemed that Bigelow would have to settle for being honored that she and her picture had even been nominated. *The Hurt Locker* faced stiff competition, after all, especially because for the first time in decades there were ten films being considered for the Oscar instead of five, and because one of them was *Avatar*, the most expensive motion picture ever made—and, of course, no woman had ever been awarded the Oscar for Direction. Complicating matters even more was the fact that *Avatar* had been directed by the award-winning James Cameron, who just happened to be Bigelow's former husband. When the smoke cleared on Oscar night, however, not only had *The Hurt Locker* won for Best Picture, Bigelow had done the unimaginable, walking away with the award for Best Director.

Hollywood in the Twenty-First Century

The prominence of the work of filmmakers such as the second-generation auteurs during the 1960s and early 1970s made it seem as if Hollywood had changed forever. Serious, socially relevant films were now the rule—filmmakers, and their studios, it seemed, would continue to provide audiences with “thinking films.” Something began to change in Hollywood in 1972, however, when Coppola's first *Godfather* film grossed an astonishing \$80 million. The next year, George Lucas released *American Graffiti*—one of the film ideas that Coppola had pitched to Warner Bros. in 1970 and that the studio had rejected—which had been made for a mere \$750,000 and that eventually grossed over \$21 million in its first run. Studio heads, who had become increasingly concerned about their declining revenues, took notice, especially when two years later, in 1975, Steven Spielberg's *Jaws* broke the box-office record that had been set by *The Godfather*, becoming the first motion picture to earn over \$100 million, and then two years after that, Lucas's *Star Wars* shattered the record that had been set by *Jaws*, earning an astonishing \$210 million in a first run that lasted from May 1977 to April 1978.

Although both Spielberg and Lucas are gifted filmmakers—especially Spielberg, who has crossed over genres from the family-oriented sci-fi adventure *E.T.* (1982) to the adult-themed drama *Schindler's List* (1993), and almost everything in between—they have been roundly criticized for bringing about the demise of the auteur

renaissance that directors like Coppola had initiated during the 1960s and early 1970s (see: Lucas, George; Spielberg, Steven). Whatever the case may be in that regard, the success of films like *American Graffiti*, *Jaws*, and *Star Wars* did change—irrevocably, it seems—the way that Hollywood understands itself. Studio heads now look forward to the so-called summer season, when they can release big budget, action-oriented “blockbusters,” which alone may make enough money to carry the studio through the year. Lucas’s and Spielberg’s films have been particularly important in defining the blockbuster phenomenon: for Lucas, *American Graffiti* and the *Star Wars* films, and for Spielberg, *Jaws*, *E.T.*, and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*; and his franchises—why make one when you can make more?—the *Raiders* and *Jurassic Park* films. Franchises have become vastly important in driving the success of the blockbuster, allowing studios to create brand-name recognition, both in regard to their films and in regard to offscreen promotions. The *Bond* films, *Rambo*, *Lethal Weapon*, *Die Hard*, *Batman*, *Star Trek*, *The Matrix*, *Lord of the Rings*, *Harry Potter*, *Spiderman*, *X-Men*, *Pirates of the Caribbean*, the *Bourne* films—the list seems inexhaustible.

As counterintuitive as it seems, though, it may be that the blockbuster is the very thing that has created a space—by way of the revenues they produce—for the work of established and newly minted auteurs, and of other filmmakers, to continue to be made. Indeed, major studios such as Sony, Paramount, and Fox, seeking to capitalize on the success of alternative filmmakers such as Quentin Tarantino, Steven Soderbergh, Tim Burton, David Lynch, and Joel and Ethan Coen, have even created indie labels—Fox’s Fox Searchlight and Time Warner’s Castle Rock, New Line, and Fine Line, for instance. Even the best known of the indie labels, Miramax and Focus Features, have “become ‘specialty units’ within their parent companies, Disney and Universal, respectively” (Lewis, 2008). Whatever the future holds for the American cinema, however, it seems clear that movies will continue to be made, that they will continue to reflect and shape the nation’s history, and that they will be viewed and enjoyed by film audiences for years to come.

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FILMS

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ALI. Michael Mann's 2001 filmic biography of boxing legend and cultural icon Muhammad Ali (Will Smith) is book ended by Ali's first and second heavyweight championship fights, beginning during his preparations for the 1964 defeat of Sonny Liston and ending immediately after his 1974 upset of George Foreman in Zaire ("The Rumble in the Jungle"). The film dramatizes a politically turbulent decade when Ali's biggest controversies occurred, including his admission to the Nation of Islam, his refusals of military induction for the Vietnam War, and his subsequent suspension from boxing in 1967.

Ali is illustrative of Mann's powerful cinematic technique. His complex narrative approach invites viewers to use their powers of analysis and relies on stylized visuals and musical choices to convey emotional depth. Mann sought to bring a sense of realism to *Ali* that would make it stand out from what he saw as the theatrically staged bouts in the *Rocky* series (1976–2006) and Martin Scorsese's impressionistically constructed battles in *Raging Bull* (1981). Toward this end, he developed a small camera that enabled him to shoot his rapidly moving actors at extremely close range. He also cast real boxers to work with Smith in the fight scenes, which were meticulously choreographed to mirror what actually transpires in the ring.

Ali's opening montage encapsulates the film's thesis: that Ali's motivations and worldview resulted from his personal experience of '60s politics and culture. Mann cuts between a live performance of "Bring It on Home to Me" by Sam Cooke (David Elliott), shots of Ali's training regimen, flashbacks to his childhood experience of segregation and early awareness of the civil rights struggle, and sequences involving his engagement with Malcolm X's political ideas. The juxtapositions draw connections between boxing and art, sports and celebrity, black culture and politics. As the song climaxes, Ali—silent up to that point—bursts through double doors to begin a harangue about rival Sonny Liston, signifying that his famous braggadocio was a product of those formative experiences.

Interestingly, Mann was hired after Smith was attached to a screenplay for *Ali*, which was unusual in that Mann normally plays a larger part in developing his films. However, he radically revised the existing script with Eric Roth, his collaborator on



Actors Michael Bent and Will Smith film a scene in *Ali* shot in February 2001 in Los Angeles. Bent portrays boxer Sonny Liston and Smith portrays boxer Muhammad Ali. In this scene the duo fights for the title in 1964. (Peter Brandt/Getty Images)

The Insider (1999), making *Ali* aesthetically and thematically his own. Like many of Mann's other films, including *Heat* and *Miami Vice*, *Ali* weaves a preoccupation with masculinity and work into a morality play. The film depicts Ali's inner conflicts, which seem to emerge out of his relationships with various paternal figures: his conformist Christian father; the radical Muslim leader Malcolm X, seen advocating black self-reliance and retaliation in contrast to the nonviolent civil rights establishment; trainer Angelo Dundee, whose devotions appear completely professional; and iconic sports-caster Howard Cosell, who may have understood and respected Ali more than anyone else in his life.

The picture marks an important turning point in Smith's dramatic film career. Not only did the role earn him his first Academy Award nomination, it also changed how he was perceived by many in Hollywood. Indeed, playing the young Muhammad Ali—who, before he became a beloved elder statesman, was understood as radical, alien, and unpatriotic—Smith altered his image in the eyes of many of his critics, who had accused him of homophobia and immaturity because he had refused to perform a homosexual kiss in *Six Degrees of Separation* (1993), and of allowing himself to be portrayed as a

supplicant “negro” whose sole purpose is to serve affluent whites by accepting his role in *The Legend of Bagger Vance*.

While Smith’s performance was applauded, critical response to the film itself was mixed. Reviewers commonly complained that it painted an inadequate picture of Ali, identifying that deficiency in various ways: the film’s limited coverage of his life; its failure to explore Ali’s impact on historical events outside of boxing; and its tendency to dwell on scenes marked by a certain narrative vagueness, sparse dialogue, and ambiguous characterization of Ali’s psychological motivations. Ironically, especially because the film was directed by Mann, it seems that some critics saw *Ali* as flawed because it failed to meet genre expectations of biopics, sports movies, or historical films; Ali, for example, although he is the central character, does not have a clear and singular adversary, nor does the film have distinguishable plot points.

See also: African Americans in Film; Mann, Michael

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—Gerald S. Sim

ALIEN. Ridley Scott’s 1979 picture *Alien* is a groundbreaking science fiction film. Notable for its extraordinary special effects, it is also unusual in that it features a woman, Sigourney Weaver, in the lead role. It was also the first of several major hits for Scott, including *Blade Runner* (1982), *Thelma and Louise* (1991), *Gladiator* (2000), and *Black Hawk Down* (2001).

Alien takes place on the *Nostromo*, a spaceship that transports mineral ore back to Earth from mining operations on other planets. On its return, the ship receives a distress signal from a nearby planet. The crew is instructed to respond to the signal and lands on the planet. Once they land, they find that the distress signal is coming from an alien spaceship. They discover the corpse of an alien and a room full of eggs. One of the eggs hatches and a small alien creature latches onto the face of Executive Officer Kane (John Hurt). The crew returns to the *Nostromo* with Kane. Eventually, the alien detaches itself from Kane’s face and dies on its own. Later, a seemingly healthy Kane begins to choke during a meal, and in what has become an iconic film moment, an alien being explodes from his chest.

From that point forward, the Alien begins to hunt and kill the seven-member crew one by one. Because the spaceship is a civilian vessel, the crew has to improvise weapons to use against what seems to be the unstoppable Alien. The film follows the crew members, led by Warrant Officer Ripley (Weaver), in trying to track down and destroy the Alien, which continues to grow, reaching its full size within hours.



Sigourney Weaver in the role of Ripley in the 1979 film *Alien*. (Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

Perhaps the most striking feature of the film is Weaver's characterization of Ripley as the assertive, even aggressive leader of the hunt for the Alien. While female stars had been a mainstay of Hollywood films for decades, their roles usually involved glamorous portrayals. Weaver's Ripley is a strong, physical character, one who uses both her intelligence and physical abilities to destroy the Alien. This turn as the heroic Ripley launched Weaver's career, making her one of the hottest properties in Hollywood. Unfortunately, even though the Ripley character as a filmic protagonist was cheered by audiences, and pointed the way toward casting women as intellectually and physically capable figures—such as Linda Hamilton in the *Terminator* sequels and Demi Moore in *G. I. Jane*—Hollywood has resisted portraying female characters in these traditionally male roles.

The production design of *Alien* is superb. Very few directors demonstrate Scott's attention to detail in regard to set design, cos-

tumes, and makeup. While his follow-up, *Blade Runner*, is often considered to have had more influence on subsequent science fiction films, *Alien* already displayed many of the design elements that mark his later films. Thus, like *Blade Runner*, the future in *Alien* is depicted as a grimy, decaying, postindustrial world. Interestingly, while dystopian themes had long been a feature of science fiction films, the narrative settings were traditionally brighter and more efficient. In *Alien*, though, the ship, where almost all the action takes place, is a clunking hulk, its corridors narrow and dark; and because the story is set in space, there obviously is nowhere for the crew members to go.

Scott faced much the same problem that Steven Spielberg confronted when he made *Jaws* in 1975: as with a 25-foot shark, even an alien with an elongated head and long, razor sharp teeth dripping with toxic saliva becomes less frightening the more audiences see it. Like Spielberg, Scott chose not to reveal too much too soon.

Throughout the film, then, the true horror of the alien creature is revealed to us slowly, part by part. Scott's decision proved to be a good one, as keeping the alien hidden away within the dark recesses of the ship, and not revealing exactly what it looks like, kept audiences on the edge of their seats.

Alien was produced for \$11 million and made \$81 million domestically. It was nominated for Best Set Design and took home the Oscar for Best Visual Effects. The film spawned three sequels: *Aliens* (1986), *Alien 3* (1992), and *Alien Resurrection* (1997). Although Weaver starred in all three sequels, Scott would not return to direct any of them.

See also: Scott, Ridley; Science Fiction Film, The

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—Govind Shanadi

ALL ABOUT EVE. In the history of the American cinema, no other film has set more records than *All about Eve*. Opening at New York's Roxy Theatre on October 13, 1950, the picture was nominated for 14 Academy Awards (a record matched only by James Cameron's *Titanic*), including Best Actress nods for Bette Davis and Anne Baxter. Joseph L. Mankiewicz won awards for Best Screenplay and Best Director, and by the end of the evening, the film had captured six Oscars, including Best Picture.

Mankiewicz based his script on a short story/radio play by actress/playwright Mary Orr that appeared in the May 1946 issue of *International Cosmopolitan Magazine* as "The Wisdom of Eve." He began work on *Best Performance* (as it was initially titled) in the fall of 1949 and found his greatest challenge to be casting the lead roles. Although Darryl Zanuck's preference for the female lead was Marlene Dietrich, Mankiewicz prevailed and he signed Claudette Colbert to play the part. Two weeks before filming was to begin, however, Colbert was forced to withdraw because of an accident. Enter Bette Davis.

All about Eve is a classic tale of ambition and deception in that most sacrosanct of institutions, the theatre. It is the story of Margo Channing (Davis), an aging actress who, upon reaching the dreaded age of 40 is experiencing, in Mankiewicz's words, "a kind of professional menopause" and feels the dazzling light of her celebrity beginning to fade (Mankiewicz and Carey, 1972). Perhaps that is why she is vulnerable to the mawkish adoration lavished upon her by the young ingénue Eve Harrington (Baxter), who is impatiently waiting in the wings to take Margo's place. Eve is ruthless, calculating, and thoroughly manipulative. From a very early age, she constructed a fantasy life for herself, and, by her own admission, "it got so that I couldn't tell the real from the unreal except that the unreal seemed more real to me . . ." (Mankiewicz and Carey).

Mankiewicz's inspiration for the character of Margo Channing was Peg Woffington of the Old Drury Lane, a formidable actress of eighteenth-century English theatre. When *All about Eve* was released, however, it was rumored that Margo was modeled on the life and career of Tallulah Bankhead. Davis did not have to borrow from anyone else's life, though, as she could well identify with the character of Margo. A celebrated actress, Davis, who was 41 herself, was dropped by Warner Bros. and feared that her career was over. But she was cheered by critics for her work in *All about Eve*—many characterized it as her “signature performance”—and after the film was released, Davis was back on top. In addition to her Oscar nomination, she won the prestigious New York Critics Circle Award as well as the award for Best Female Performance at the Cannes Film Festival.

Described as a brilliant “needle-sharp study of bitchery in the Broadway theater” (*Time*, 1950) and as “the greatest woman's picture of all time” (Geist, 164), *All about Eve* explored the dilemma confronting the 1950s woman forced to choose between a career and marriage. The nineteenth-century ideal of the “cult of domesticity,” it may be argued, was reborn in post–World War II, suburban America, with hearth and home once again marking out the proper domain for the 1950s woman. Faced with mounting pressure to conform to society's expectations, women were now marrying earlier and forgoing careers. Indeed, even Margo Channing, the tough, fiercely independent, enormously successful actress, is given to self-doubt on this issue and fears one day ending up an “old maid.” She even admits to Karen that she feels incomplete without a man in her life. In the end, Margo—leading the way for her adoring female fans—chooses wedded bliss over a career, literally falling into the strong, protective arms of her lover who allays her fears: “Bill's here, baby. Everything's all right, now.” The lion is tamed, then, and society can rest assured that gender balance has been restored.

See also: Melodrama, The; Women in Film

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—Lorraine Coons

ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT. Released in 1930, *All Quiet on the Western Front* was directed by Lewis Milestone and starred Lew Ayres as the principal character, Paul Baumer. Adapted from Erich Maria Remarque's 1929 novel *Im Westen*

Nichts Neues, it won the Academy Award for Best Picture and Best Director. Since its release, it has been cited on many lists as a classic American film. In 1990, it was selected for preservation by the Library of Congress's National Film Registry.

Author Remarque was 18 years old when he volunteered for service in the German army and was sent to the Western Front. He suffered a leg injury, was hospitalized, and survived the war. After working as a school teacher for a time, he gained sudden fame—and considerable notoriety—when *Im Westen Nichts Neues* was published. At the time, National Socialism was becoming a powerful tool in promoting the militaristic ambitions of the *Vaterland*. Although the novel was remarkably apolitical and dispassionate in its refusal to take sides in regard to the Great War, it was banned in Germany. In a poignant passage near the end of the book, the narrator speaks rhetorically to the enemy: “Why do they never tell us that you are just poor devils like us, that your mothers are just as anxious as ours, and that we have the same fear of death, and the same dying and the same agony—Forgive me, comrade; how could you be my enemy? If we threw away these rifles and this uniform you could be my brother. . . .” Still later, as he is dying, the soldier declares in his diary: “I am young, I am twenty years old; yet I know nothing of life but despair, death, fear, and fatuous superficiality cast over an abyss of sorrow. . . . Our knowledge of life is limited to death. . . . What would our fathers do if we suddenly stood up and came before them and proffered our account?” When Hitler and the Nazis burned *Im Westen Nichts Neues* after they came to power in the 1930s, Remarque regarded the act as a badge of honor.

Both book and film pick up the action in August 1914, when the German Schlieffen Plan was succeeding in carrying the Kaiser's armies through Belgium and deep into France. By early 1915, however, British and French resistance brought the advance to a standstill. The war of maneuver was over; now the perversely stultifying fight on the Western Front would be waged between opposing armies dug into trenches that stretched for hundreds of miles while sometimes lying only yards apart.

The narrative is viewed through the eyes of a German infantryman. As opposed to the book's impressionistic scattering of sketches, episodes, and flashbacks to the prewar days, Milestone's adaptation rewrites the story into a chronological narrative, adding many sequences of actual combat. We see the protagonist, Paul (Lew Ayres), leave his school, slog through the trenches, endure the horrors of amputation and disease, enjoy a brief respite with some German peasant girls, return home on leave to a homeland that he neither recognizes nor understands, return to battle, and suffer a leg injury that places him in the hands of surgeons all too eager to amputate and nuns blinded to the war by an insular faith. In a climactic scene not included in the novel, while trapped in a trench in “No-Man's-Land,” Paul is shot dead while reaching up to touch a butterfly.

If there is a villain here, it is the schoolmaster, Kantorek (Arnold Lucy), whose patriotic exhortations to his students conclude with the line, “Won't you join up, comrades?” In a powerful scene that is not found in the book—it was conceived by playwright Maxwell Anderson—Paul returns to his village after years of fighting. When he visits his old teacher, he is shocked to hear him delivering the same patriotic

speech to the new students. Paul angrily turns on Kantorek and delivers a stern warning to him and the students about the brutality of war.

In his study of the film, Andrew Kelly (Kelly, 2005) sums up the qualities that qualify it for inclusion in the company of other great World War I films: "It brings together—indeed, helped establish—the classic themes of the antiwar film, book, play and poem: the enemy as comrade, the brutality of militarism; the slaughter of trench warfare; the betrayal of a nation's youth by old men revelling in glory, the incompetence of the High Command; the suffering at home . . . the dead; and the forgotten men who survived."

See also: War Film, The

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—*John C. Tibbetts*

ALL THE KING'S MEN. Robert Rossen's *All the King's Men* is a 1949 film version of Robert Penn Warren's novel by the same name. The novel appeared in 1947, and Rossen's picture was the first film version to appear. Steven Zaillian's remake appeared in 2006. The film presents the corrupting power of politics and the danger of demagoguery; the film and the novel also make claims about the pervasiveness of corruption among all human beings.

The film contains all of the main characters of the novel, but it gives primary attention to Willie Stark (Broderick Crawford), while it could be argued that Jack Burden and Willie Stark are at least equally important in the novel. The later film version comes closer to capturing the essence of the novel, focusing more on the Burden character and his philosophical ruminations.

Set in a southern state, Stark is first seen as a candidate for county treasurer who draws attention to greed and malfeasance by some local elected officials. Although he loses the election, he is successful at exposing a crooked arrangement between the county government and the builder of the local school. He subsequently gains notoriety when faulty construction leads to the death of a number of schoolchildren. At this point he is depicted as an honest politician possessing genuine care for the people.

Eventually, Stark is recruited to run for governor as a means of dividing the rural vote and ensuring the victory of the candidate of the city-based political machine. In the midst of the race, there is an abrupt transformation in Stark. He realizes that he has been duped and instead of giving up, he becomes the voice of the people. He labels himself a "hick," just like the poor citizens of his state, and presents himself as their advocate, running a tireless campaign against the machine. As a political figure, the



Broderick Crawford addresses the crowd from the balcony of his campaign headquarters in the 1948 political drama *All The King's Men*, based on the life of Louisiana governor Huey Long. The film was directed by Robert Rossen for Columbia. (Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

Stark character is patterned after Huey Long, the flamboyant Louisiana politician who was elected governor in 1928 and assassinated in 1935, most probably because of his support for policies such as transferring wealth from the rich to the poor.

While Stark loses his first campaign for governor, he develops a taste for politics and wins an impressive victory in the next race. As governor, he breaks the law and runs roughshod over the state legislature, ruling as a demagogue and a tyrant. There is always a sense of mixed motives in Stark. He starts out as a faithful husband, a man who is restrained in his appetites; but the seductive quality of political power seems to unleash his desires. After becoming governor, he frequently imbibes and satisfies his sexual urges with a string of mistresses. His relationship with his wife becomes a formality, and in his relationships with his father and son he is cold and distant. Ironically, it seems that the more personally corrupt he becomes, the more he fights for his dispossessed citizens.

Significantly, while most of the characters in *All the King's Men* are portrayed as politically corrupt, they are not all depicted in this way. Politics, then, according to Warren and Rossen, is not necessarily an inherently corrupting practice; but it certainly contributes to and encourages corruption. As was mentioned, the novel and the film are not only about political corruption: they also suggest that all people tend toward

the corrupt. With this in mind, the character of Jack Burden acts as the prophetic presence in both the novel and film, giving expression to this notion of the ubiquity of human imperfection.

Cautionary tales, both the novel and the film still end on a redemptive note. In the novel, Burden ultimately commits to do the good work of the populist politician; and in the film, he and Sadie Burke, who had been Stark's lover and political collaborator, agree in a brief scene to carry on the good work that Stark had initiated.

See also: Politics and Film

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—*Michael L. Coulter*

AMERICAN GRAFFITI. Before *Star Wars*, before *Indiana Jones*, before critics such as Peter Biskind and David Thomson blamed him for the "decline" of American cinema, George Lucas made *American Graffiti*, a film about a land not so far away in a time not so long ago. The film won rave reviews, spawned a hugely successful and influential soundtrack, earned five Oscar nominations (including Best Picture, Best Director, and Best Screenplay), and pulled in over \$100 million at the box office—a figure that, adjusted for inflation, places it among the top fifty grossing films in American history. Over 40 years later, the film retains its position within the popular pantheon—as evinced by its inclusion in the American Film Institute's list of the 100 greatest American films in 1998 and 2007.

Lucas could have scarcely imagined such success when he began the screenplay after the failure of his debut film, *THX 1138* (1971). He set his story in 1962, the year he graduated high school, and based most of the exploits of the film's main characters on his own teenage experiences. Lucas wanted to document the world he once knew and communicate that memory to Americans too young to have experienced it firsthand.

The film unfolds over the course of one long summer night, centering on events in the lives of John Milner (Paul Le Mat), Terry Fields (Charles Martin Smith), Steve Bolander (Ron Howard), and Curt Henderson (Richard Dreyfuss). John is a 22-year-old drag racer who senses his own obsolescence, while Terry remains wedded to the mythology surrounding John. If this duo is tethered to a dying world, Steve and Curt are poised to break out of it. They are scheduled to depart the next day for college. Initially the most enthusiastic advocate of escaping their "turkey town," Steve ultimately cannot bear to leave his girlfriend, Laurie (Cindy Williams). The bright but indecisive Curt reverses Steve's trajectory. The night's events compel him to reconsider his reluctance to leave his hometown. As such, the next morning Curt leaves alone.



Mel's drive-in from *American Graffiti* (1973), directed by George Lucas. (MCA/Universal Pictures/Photofest)

Postscripts reveal their fates: John dies in an automobile accident; Terry is reported missing-in- action in Vietnam; Steve sells insurance in Modesto; Curt lives and writes in Canada.

American Graffiti rekindled a fascination for the “long ’50s,” that period extending roughly from the end of World War II through our beginnings in Vietnam, 1945–1965. It also inspired a wave of imitators—including the long running, immensely popular sitcoms *Happy Days* and *Laverne & Shirley*. These two shows underscored their connection to *American Graffiti* by casting Ron Howard and Cindy Williams as leads. While *Happy Days* would undertake some culturally dubious projects in sanitizing the era, it would be a mistake to project its cultural sins back upon the film that inspired it. *American Graffiti* does not posit the long ’50s as a better, simpler, more innocent time. It endorses Curt’s decision to embrace the ’60s. He certainly fares better than those who cannot, or will not, leave the ’50s behind. Steve retreats to the suburbs, choosing a career, insurance, that by its very nature privileges safety and caution. John, the ’50s greaser, dies a violent death, one that symbolizes the passing of the ’50s and its hot-rod culture. Terry’s fate speaks to the cultural consequences of the Vietnam War, which left the nation adrift, lost, its cultural narratives besieged, its sense of self embattled.

While Curt does not emerge from the ’60s unscathed, he is alive and pursuing a career that allows for self-expression. Indeed, Curt’s fate is expressive of Lucas’s basic

maxim: we should embrace freedom while accepting the uncertainties our choices entail. In that sense, Curt resembles THX, Lucas's first hero, who, having been sentenced to a prison with no restraints other than the fear of its inmates, escapes by simply walking out. Like THX, Curt shuns the security of a constrained, regimented world for a freer, more uncertain future. This message, and its encoding of the shift from the '50s to the '60s as a moment of liberating possibilities, would also serve as the keynote for a series of cinematic meditations on the transition from the '50s to the '60s, including *The Wanderers* (1979), *Dirty Dancing* (1987), and *Pleasantville* (1998).

See also: Lucas, George

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—Christopher D. Stone

AMERICAN IN PARIS, AN. Vincente Minnelli and Gene Kelly's second collaboration (following 1948's *The Pirate*) was one of the most celebrated musicals of its time, receiving six Academy Awards, including honors for screenplay, musical score, cinematography, and as the best picture of 1951. It also provided the occasion for Gene Kelly's only Oscar, an honorary award bestowed "not only because of his extreme versatility as an actor, singer, director, and dancer, but because of his specific and brilliant achievements in the art of choreography on film."

Conceived as a platform for the music of the Gershwins, the plot is straightforward. Jerry Mulligan (Kelly), a former GI, has remained in Paris to pursue the life of a painter. Jerry lives in the same building as his friend Adam (Oscar Levant, a well-known Gershwin associate), a concert pianist who never performs. Jerry meets and falls in love with Lise Bouvier (Leslie Caron), a young woman engaged to Henri Baurel, an entertainer (Georges Guétary, in a part originally intended for Maurice Chevalier) who, it happens, once employed Adam. Though Lise feels indebted to Henri for sheltering her during the war, she cannot deny her connection with Jerry. Meanwhile, Jerry becomes involved with a wealthy divorcée, Milo Roberts (Nina Foch), who routinely "sponsors" artists as a way of picking them up. On the eve of Lise and Henri's marriage, the major characters attend a ball, where Henri overhears Lise telling Jerry that they cannot be together. Broken-hearted, Jerry confesses his feelings for Lise to Milo, who is stung; a deleted scene indicates that Milo will next sponsor Adam. Henri and Lise depart, and Jerry re-imagines his pursuit of Lise in the form of a ballet. Following the ballet, Henri and Lise return—apparently Henri has gallantly stepped aside so that Lise and Jerry can be together. Lise and Jerry run toward each other and embrace on the steps.

Jerry's reverie is the film's climax, an extraordinarily ambitious 17-minute ballet set to Gershwin's tone poem "An American in Paris." Virtually a separate production—

Minnelli even employed a different cinematographer, John Alton—the initial budget for the ballet added over \$500,000 to the film's cost of about \$2 million, and it required six more weeks of production time. Unsurprisingly, these plans met with resistance, but Minnelli, Kelly, and producer Arthur Freed were adamant. Minnelli had experimented with increasingly elaborate ballet sequences in *Ziegfeld Follies* (1946 [shot 1944]), *Yolanda and the Thief* (1945), and *The Pirate*; the milestone British film *The Red Shoes* (1948), along with Kelly's well-received ballet in *On the Town* (1949), suggested to them that audiences were prepared for the complexity of the "American in Paris Ballet." The production depicts Parisian locales in the style of paintings associated with them: the Place de la Concorde fountain a la Dufy, a flower market a la Manet, the Place de l'Opéra a la Van Gogh, and so on. The dancers form part of these tableaux—for instance, Kelly dances in a Montmartre café while costumed as Toulouse-Lautrec's Chocolat—so that the ballet evokes a series of choreographed three-dimensional paintings. Rather than transferring dance to the screen like *The Red Shoes*, the film offers what Kelly termed a "cineballet," an artform that truly merges cinema with ballet.

During rehearsals, Kelly's wife Betsy Blair was named in *Red Channels*, a publication that allegedly identified subversives working in the entertainment industry. Blair's politics were forthrightly leftist (she once attempted to join the Communist Party), and she was soon blacklisted. Relatively more moderate, Kelly was still a progressive—for instance, he was a member of the Committee for the First Amendment, formed in support of the Hollywood Ten. Though outwardly apolitical, *An American in Paris*'s representation of the pitfalls of entangling "sponsorships"—whether Henri's sponsorship of Lise or Milo's of Jerry—seems influenced by anxiety that even well-meaning affiliations with the wrong people can have disastrous consequences. That the narrative resorts to a fantasy ballet as the solution to this problem suggests that the filmmakers believed that art could somehow transcend politics. Of course, reality is less forgiving: partly because of the political climate, Kelly was not present to accept his honorary Oscar—he and his family moved to Europe in late 1951.

See also: Kelly, Gene; Musical, The

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—Matthew Sewell

ANGELS WITH DIRTY FACES. The gangster films of the 1930s provided the first significant test of the new Production Code adopted by the board of directors of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors Association in 1930. Although adherence to the Code was voluntary until the formation of the Production Code Administration



James Cagney (left) stars as Rocky Sullivan and Pat O'Brien as Jerry Connolly in *Angels with Dirty Faces*, 1938. (Silver Screen Collection/Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

(PCA) in 1934, films such as *Little Caesar* (1930) and *The Public Enemy* (1931) attempted to mitigate objections that they glorified criminal behavior by claiming—as did the title card of *The Public Enemy*—that they sought only “to honestly depict an environment that exists today in a certain strata of American life.” *Angels with Dirty Faces* (1938) was the first film of this genre to respond specifically to the provisions of the Code by offering the “compensatory values” that PCA chair Joseph Breen demanded.

In the film, boyhood friends Rocky Sullivan (James Cagney) and Jerry Connolly (Pat O'Brien) attempt to commit a petty crime and are chased by the police. Jerry escapes, but Rocky is caught and sent to reform school, beginning his descent into a life of crime that is illustrated through a rapid montage of blazing guns, gangland attacks, and blaring newspaper headlines. After a stint in prison, Rocky returns to his old neighborhood where Jerry is now the pastor of the urban Catholic parish where he and Rocky were once altar boys. Inadvertently, the two friends become locked in a battle for the hearts and souls of a gang of delinquents (the Dead End Kids), and while the earnest priest coaches their basketball team in a decrepit gym, Rocky's charisma and prosperous lifestyle prove more seductive. Jerry then spearheads a reform effort

that leads to the arrest and conviction of Rocky, who is sentenced to death. In prison, Jerry asks Rocky for a final sacrifice—to go to the chair a coward as an object lesson for “the boys” he fears he has otherwise lost. Although Rocky initially refuses to surrender his dignity in this way, he breaks down as he is led into the execution chamber and begs not to die. In the final scene, Jerry confirms to the boys that Rocky indeed died a coward, and then leads them out of their basement hideout to “say a prayer for a boy who couldn’t run as fast as I could.”

Counterpoising the criminal Rocky with the virtuous Jerry allowed the film to exploit the explicit violence of the gangster movie genre—a formula that guaranteed profit—while simultaneously responding to the concerns of Breen and the PCA. As a devout Catholic, Breen not only controlled the imprimatur of the PCA, but he had tremendous influence over the newly formed Legion of Decency, a public pressure group that, perhaps even more than the PCA, gave teeth to the Code. Although the Irish Catholic Rocky exemplified the ethnic stereotypes of urban violence to which Breen and the Legion objected, the character of Jerry offered a compensatory figure who, like Rocky, was also the product of an urban Catholic childhood. Not only did the character provide the necessary moral recompense that ameliorated any opposition the PCA or the Legion might retain toward the film, but O’Brien’s saintly depiction of Fr. Jerry became the prototype of the courageous cinematic priest, who personified the moral conscience of a nation at a time when Catholicism was still viewed with deep suspicion by most Americans. From Spencer Tracy’s Fr. Flanagan in *Boys Town* (1938) to Karl Malden’s Fr. Barry in *On the Waterfront* (1954), the tough-minded Catholic priest—preferably one of Irish extraction who, like Fr. Jerry, could take down an opponent with a single punch—became an unlikely American hero.

Despite Jerry’s impeccable virtue, however, the significance of Rocky’s final actions (presented only in shadows) remains murky. Explicitly, the film resolves the question of Rocky’s breakdown in favor of Jerry’s request, as Jerry tearfully gazes heavenward while Rocky begs for mercy. Implicitly, however, the motivation for Rocky’s action remains ambiguous, with the moralizing ending preferred by the PCA offering only one possible interpretation. In popular culture, Cagney’s unrepentant Rocky became the more enduring character.

See also: Gangster Film, The; Hays Office and Censorship, The

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—Rodger M. Payne

ANNIE HALL. *Annie Hall* (1977) is considered Woody Allen's first masterpiece, a film that redefined the romantic comedy. It is the story of the rise and fall of the romantic relationship between Alvy Singer (Allen) and Annie Hall (Diane Keaton). The film was a tour de force, employing numerous cinematic and narrative techniques, including animation, visual effects, flashbacks, and breaking the fourth wall by having the lead character directly address the audience. It also established Diane Keaton as a star, and made the character of Annie Hall into a pop culture phenomenon, with thousands of women adopting her quirky style of dress and favorite catch phrase: La-dee-da, La-dee-da. The film opens with Singer, who is a stand-up comic, addressing the audience directly. He relates two jokes that define his adult life as it pertains to relationships with women, announces that he and Annie broke up, and then briefly describes his childhood. The juxtaposition of these narrative elements serves to establish the context for his character and how his childhood (which is examined later in the film) played a key role in his relationship with women.

Annie Hall begins with a joke and ends with a joke. In framing this incredibly complex, and oddly serious, film in this way, Allen may be turning our attention back to Freud and his work, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*. There, Freud described the joke as a linguistic envelope containing sublimated desires and complex ideas. Allen, it seems, agrees; and thus, with *Annie Hall*, he appears to be reminding the viewer that while comedy shouldn't be taken too seriously, for him it remains the best way to explore the seriousness of life.



Actor Diane Keaton talks to actor and director Woody Allen on the roof of a building in a still from Allen's film *Annie Hall*. (United Artists/Getty Images)

In the opening monologue, Allen says of his breakup with Anne, “I just can’t get my mind around it.” While at first this may seem to be merely another way of saying he’s having a difficult time reconciling the situation, in the next scene we realize that the statement has a deeper philosophical meaning. After Alvy returns from meeting Annie in California, he is watching a rehearsal of his play. The stage scene being rehearsed is a reenactment of the last meeting between Alvy and Annie, except that in the play, “Sally” agrees to return to New York with “Alvy,” confessing her love for him. Once it is revealed to the (film) audience that Alvy has created a scene that alters the reality of his situation, he looks directly into the camera and says: “What do you want? It was my first play. You know how you’re always trying to get things to come out perfect in art because it’s real difficult in life.” Here, it seems, what Allen appears to be saying is that the struggle to get his “mind around” the situation represents an attempt, both filmically and literally, to trope and redefine emotional boundaries—again, the frivolity of comedy exposing the seriousness of life.

Allen originally envisioned this movie as a murder mystery, with a subplot about a romance. During script revisions, he decided to drop the murder plot, which he and Marshall Brickman later revisited in *Manhattan Murder Mystery* (1993). Interestingly, the film’s working title was “Anhedonia”—the inability to feel pleasure. It could refer to Annie’s incapacity to feel anything without the aid of marijuana—Alvy tries desperately to convince her that she does not need to smoke in order to enjoy sex: isn’t he enough?—but it also may refer to Alvy’s failure to enjoy life. Annie likens him to the “dying city” of New York, an island incapable of feeling. Film critic Roger Ebert claims that the film establishes its tone by constantly switching tones. This switching reflects the restless mind of the filmmaker, but also implicates his surroundings, New York City, which he and Alvy refuse to leave. As Allen demonstrates in the opening sequence of *Manhattan*, the artist struggles to find his voice.

Annie Hall won four Academy Awards, including Best Picture, Best Director, Best Screenplay, and Best Actress (Keaton). *Annie Hall* marks Allen’s transition away from screwball comedy and toward the seriocomedy subgenre he would master in the 1980s. *Annie Hall* is also the first of three films that explore the relationship between the artist and his art. The others are *Manhattan* and *Stardust Memories*.

See also: Allen, Woody

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—Dean R. Cooledge

APOCALYPSE NOW. *Apocalypse Now* (1979) was supposed to be the first major studio film to address the Vietnam War since *The Green Berets* in 1968. Co-written and directed by Francis Ford Coppola, the film’s production was fraught with problems—a typhoon, political unrest, health emergencies, among others—that took it



Actor Robert Duvall watches as bombs explode in the distance in a scene from *Apocalypse Now* shot on May 15, 1976, in the Philippines. The movie was one of a number of anti-war films made from 1978 to 1989 that depicted the gruesome brutality of the conflict in Southeast Asia and that suggested that the American presence in Vietnam had been tragically wrong. (Getty Images)

millions over budget and years past its planned release date. Eagerly awaited but derided as “Apocalypse Never” in the press, it was preceded in 1978 by Michael Cimino’s *The Deer Hunter*, which created a sensation that blunted the later film’s impact on both critics and the public. Eventually grossing over \$150 million worldwide, *Apocalypse Now* garnered six Academy Award nominations but just two wins, for cinematography and sound editing, the latter an acknowledgment of its pioneering use of surround sound. The film did not inspire a national conversation about the Vietnam War, as *Platoon* would seven years later, but its disturbing collage of brilliant imagery, hallucinatory music, and literary allusion established it as an iconic text of the era and cemented Coppola’s reputation as a virtuoso filmmaker.

Inspired by Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, *Apocalypse Now* also contains allusions to *The Odyssey* and Dante’s *Inferno* as it follows Captain Willard on his quest to assassinate Colonel Kurtz, a rogue American officer who has formed a murderous warrior cult deep in the Cambodian jungle. Willard and his naval escort travel upriver, a metaphorical journey that represents the United States’ descent into the Vietnam quagmire, humanity’s descent into the madness of war, and a mythic voyage away from civilization and into the primitive past. The film unfolds as a series of bizarre vignettes that comment on the Vietnam War’s internal contradictions and the seductive nature of violence: a devastating helicopter assault on a pastoral but well-armed Vietnamese

village so that American soldiers may surf the nearby waters; a USO show in which pinups dressed as cowgirls and Indians invoke the link between sex and savagery as they whip their GI audience into a riotous frenzy; and a bridge at the furthest reaches of American influence, where soldiers rebuild every day only to be bombed every night, and no one is in command. The little boat on which Willard and company travel represents order and reason, but the jungle slowly encroaches: a tiger and later spear-throwing natives attack them, the men use palm fronds to replace a damaged canopy, and they coat their faces with the shadowy greens of camouflage paint. When the survivors arrive in Kurtz's realm, they find a wonderland of violence and despair. Kurtz, filmed solely in silhouette and hatchet light, is an articulate but brutish giant of martial authority who has clearly gone insane. Everywhere, the fruits of his madness are realized as corpses dangling from the trees. And yet Kurtz's assessment of the war seems remarkably clear: "We train young men to drop fire on people, but their commanders won't allow them to write 'fuck' on their airplanes because it's obscene."

In this irony, *Apocalypse Now* exposes the madness of war itself, and in some ways the film offers an explicit critique of the Vietnam War, which did encompass elective battles fought for dubious gain, the slaking of rapacious sexual appetites, and futile campaigns to destroy bridges and other military objectives (in reality, Vietnamese bridges, repeatedly targeted by American bombs). At the same time, the original cut of the film makes no attempt to establish the postcolonial, political context of the war, an omission the more didactic *Apocalypse Now Redux* (2001) amends with lengthy scenes at a French plantation. *Apocalypse Now* treats the Vietnam War as myth, depersonalizing its critique of American imperialism by rendering the war in grotesquely broad strokes that preempt the audience's emotional identification with the main characters. While 1979 audiences may have read antiwar sentiment into the film—the title is a twist on the slogan "Peace Now!"—their own memories of the conflict probably informed that interpretation. Divorced from its post-Vietnam context, the film is politically ambiguous, as it fetishizes violence by depicting helicopters and napalm strikes in beautiful tableaux.

Apocalypse Now ends with the actual ritual slaughter of a water buffalo crosscut with footage of Willard butchering Kurtz, suggesting sacrificial purification to serve the greater good. For his actions, Kurtz's followers seem to regard Willard as a god, and when he drops his weapon, they drop theirs. Willard leads the sole survivor of his original cohort back to the boat, and it heads downstream. Kurtz offers a final voice-over benediction, "The horror, the horror," borrowed directly from *Heart of Darkness*. Coppola shot footage for months without an ending in mind, rendering the production of the film as aimless as the war itself. The bizarre resolution Coppola stumbled upon left audiences confused and failed to provoke a consistent emotional response that might have coalesced into a cultural reevaluation of the Vietnam War and American soldiers' role in it. By his own admission in the film's printed program (there were no credits on-screen), Coppola's intent was not to tell a story, but rather to "create a film experience that would give its audience a sense of the horror, the madness, the sensuousness, and the moral dilemma of the Vietnam War." *Apocalypse Now* placed ambivalence and ambiguity at the center of the Vietnam narrative and, in so doing, approximated an

essential truth of America's Vietnam misadventure, which remains a heavily disputed tangle of myth and memory.

See also: Coppola, Francis Ford; War Film, The

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—Meredith H. Lair

BADLANDS. Terrence Malick's *Badlands* (1973) is representative of the kind of movies directed by a relatively small number of brilliant filmmakers—Arthur Penn, Roman Polanski, Martin Scorsese, Francis Ford Coppola, and Robert Altman come to mind—whose work acted as a disruptive force in American cinema during the tumultuous decade of the 1970s. *Badlands* was Malick's second film, and in it, he began to knit together a thematic thread—the haunting, frightening experience of the fragile human being unceremoniously thrown into a capricious, indifferent state of nature—that would weave its way through his subsequent works *Days of Heaven* (1978) and *The Thin Red Line* (1998). Featuring two young actors making their feature film debuts—Martin Sheen as Kit and Sissy Spacek as Holly—the film was loosely based on the real life story of Charles Starkweather and Caril Ann Fugate, who went on a killing spree in Nebraska and Wyoming in 1957.

After another stultifying day working as a garbage collector, 25-year-old Kit spies 15-year-old Holly twirling a baton in her front yard. Holly is immediately drawn to the boyishly charming Kit, and the two begin to spend more and more time together, much to the consternation of Holly's father (Warren Oates), who is disturbed not only by the difference in their ages, but also by Kit's profession. An argument ensues between the two men after Holly's father returns home one night to find Kit and Holly together in his house. When Holly's father goes to the phone to call the police, Kit pulls out a gun and casually asks him, "Suppose I shot you, how'd that be?" Startlingly, we have the sense that Kit is posing some sort of depth-level existential question: How *would* it be if I shot someone? When he pulls the trigger a few seconds later, the moment seems both horrifying and strangely inevitable—for Kit, there is no other choice, fate has determined that he must have the answer to his question. (In a voice-over, Holly tells us that one of the things that attracted her to Kit was the fact that to her, he looked like the actor James Dean. Interestingly, this intertextual reference to James Dean, who had died tragically in a car accident in 1955, links the angst-filled actor not only to the filmic character Kit, but also to Sheen, who would go on to become a Vietnam-era filmic representative of dispossessed American youth).

After her father is killed, Holly decides to flee with Kit in his car. The two survive by living off the land until they are discovered by a group of bounty hunters. Kit manages

to dispatch the entire group with rounds from a rifle, launching the couple's killing spree in earnest. Because *Badlands* followed what for its time was the hyperviolent *Bonnie and Clyde*, which had shocked, and thrilled, audiences when it was released in 1967, viewers had come to accept—and even to expect—big-screen carnage. Unlike *Bonnie and Clyde*, however, who were depicted as tragic antiheroes, Kit and Holly were deeply troubling characters—joyless, bored, anesthetized, they seem unredeemable. In the end, Kit is thrilled by his celebrity, even offering the man who is guarding him after the two are captured his comb as a souvenir.

The breathtaking cinematography and spare, unsettling narrative focus of Malick's film impressed critics, most of whom knew they were watching something special. Although it was a critical success, however, audiences generally stayed away, and the film proved a box-office disappointment. The picture made its mark on other filmmakers, though; indeed, Oliver Stone—who directed Sheen's son, Charlie, himself a late twentieth-century/new millennium-era filmic representative of dispossessed American youth, in *Platoon*—would revisit this theme in his 1997 film *Natural Born Killers*. Oddly, Malick has only directed three other films since he made *Badlands*: the aforementioned *Days of Heaven* and *The Thin Red Line*, and most recently *The New World* (2005), a period piece about the clash between John Smith and the native peoples he encountered in colonial Virginia. Even with this limited output, however, Malick has established himself as an important American filmmaker.

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—Govind Shanadi

BAMBI. Walt Disney's fifth animated feature film, *Bambi* (1942) is based on the 1923 book *Bambi: Eine Lebensgeschichte aus dem Walde* (*Bambi: A Life in the Woods*) by the Austrian-Hungarian Jewish writer Felix Salten. Although Salten's book is an adult allegory, showing the growing threats toward European Jews in the period between the World Wars, Disney, who had started working on the movie in the 1930s when the number of whitetail deer in the United States had been severely reduced, turned it into a serious film about the mismanagement of the U.S. forests, sending a message to American audiences to treat nature with care and to defend it against human incursion. Significantly, while Salten's book was banned by the Nazis in Austria in 1936, after the release of the film in the United States, Disney confronted vehement protests from the American Rifleman's Association, which accused him of having an antihunter bias.

Bambi is a coming-of-age story of a whitetail deer. As a fawn, Bambi explores the forest with his closest friends, the rabbit Thumper, the skunk Flower, and the

doe-fawn Faline, and is introduced to its dangers by his mother. During the winter, his mother is killed by a hunter, and Bambi, the son of the Great Prince of the Forest, has to learn to live without her. When spring returns, Bambi, now taller and stronger, falls in love with Faline and is forced to fight a rival buck who wants her for his own. One morning, a fire sweeps through the forest. Bambi saves Faline, who is being chased by hunting dogs, but during the escape, a dog bites his leg. Close to giving up, he is reminded by his father that he needs to be strong; summoning his courage, Bambi makes good his escape. One year later, Faline gives birth to twins, and Bambi, watching his father leave, takes over his role as the new Great Prince of the Forest.

Bambi lost money at the box office when it was initially released—Disney failed to duplicate the success of *Snow White* (1937)—although it did receive three Academy Award nominations for Best Sound, Best Song, and Original Music Score. While today the film is highly regarded—a sequel was made in 2006, and in 2008 the American Film Institute included it on its list of the ten best animated movies—in 1942, critics and audiences alike were deeply unsettled by the picture’s realism. War-weary Americans, it seems, whose husbands and sons were dying in battle thousands of miles from home, wanted to escape from reality rather than confront it in their local movie theatres.

Bambi does indeed contain some of the most dramatic and frightening moments in Disney animated film history: the forest fire; Faline’s desperate flight from fierce hunting dogs; Bambi’s clash with a rival buck; and especially the death of Bambi’s mother—which still brings tears to the eyes of moviegoers and leaves many wondering if this should even be considered a “children’s movie.” Interestingly, Disney’s own daughter repeatedly reproached him for having Bambi’s mother die, but he argued that it was part of the original novel.

Despite the criticism—and its lackluster commercial performance—*Bambi* proved to be an important movie for Disney, particularly from a technical standpoint, as it provided the special effects foundation for future animated feature films. Disney had his artists carefully study the anatomy of real-life animals before they drew their filmic characters, and this attention to detail showed in the strongly naturalized stylistics of the picture, which captured even the smallest details of Bambi’s wildlife world.

See also: Animation; Coming-of-Age Film, The; Disney, Walt

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—Daniela Ribitsch

BATMAN. Tim Burton's 1989 film *Batman* brought the fictional hero to a post-Reagan-era America. Originally created by Bob Kane for DC Comics in 1939 as part of the burgeoning "superhero" genre, the character of The Batman had gone through several incarnations prior to the release of the film. Inspired by Frank Miller's critically acclaimed 1985 graphic novel *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*, Burton's protagonist was no longer merely a "do-gooder" or an example of "pop art camp," but a dark, avenging force working against the cabals of modern organized crime.

After the success of the 1978 film *Superman*, "Batfilms Productions" was launched to bring Superman's contemporary and longtime comic book partner to the big screen. After several attempts, the production team that finally produced results was that of Peter Guber and Jon Peters. With a script by Sam Hamm and Warren Skaaren, a score by Danny Elfman—with additional songs by musical sensation Prince—and Burton, hot off of his back-to-back successes as director of *Pee Wee's Big Adventure* (1987) and *Beetlejuice* (1988), the release date of the new Bat-film was slated for the 50th anniversary of the character's debut.

Starring Michael Keaton as Batman/Bruce Wayne, Kim Basinger as his love interest and acclaimed reporter Vicky Vale, and film icon Jack Nicholson as the equally iconic villain the Joker, the film presents a dark and dangerous futuristic Gotham City in the clutches of organized crime, its police and politicians as corrupt as the villains they are allegedly seeking to bring to justice. As the story begins, rumors abound among the underground of Gotham that a creature known as "The Batman" prowls the night, punishing evildoers. The audience soon learns that this vigilante is actually multimillionaire Bruce Wayne, whose parents were killed, when he was a boy, by a common street thug, inspiring him to dedicate his life to fighting crime in all its macabre forms. Early in the film, Bruce meets Vicky, who has come to Gotham to investigate The Batman.

The film's primary antagonist is the Joker. Originally hired thug Jack Napier, he is caught in a liaison with the girlfriend of his employer, Boss Carl Grissom. Grissom sets up Jack, who, while evading the police—and The Batman—falls into a vat of acid, permanently altering his appearance, making his skin ghostly white and his hair bright green. Looking much like a Joker from a deck of cards, the now-insane Napier proceeds to wage war on Gotham and Batman. Before the story reaches its climax, Batman learns that the Joker is in fact the person who murdered his parents. As the film concludes, Batman has made a truce with Gotham Police Commissioner Jim Gordon and provided the police with the symbolic "Bat-Signal" that allows them to call him should he once again be needed.

The release of *Batman* gave rise to a wave of "Bat-mania" around the country. Part of what made the film so popular, it seems, was its reintroduction of a decades-old character that was relevant for a new generation. This Batman fought against the greed and corruption that had become commonplace in the "me decade" of the 1980s. For those whose only memory of Batman was the 1960s television series figure played by Adam West, or the 1970s Saturday morning cartoon *Superfriends*, Burton's *Batman* seemed a startling reimagining of the character. But for those who had followed the comic series religiously—particularly the gritty Denny O'Neil/Neil Adams offerings of the 1970s and early '80s—the film captured the joyfully disturbing quality of the real Batman.

Hoping to build on the positive audience reaction to the 1989 picture, filmmakers produced a series of increasingly unsuccessful sequels throughout the 1990s: *Batman Returns* (1992), also directed by Burton; *Batman Forever* (1995), directed by Joel Schumacher and starring Val Kilmer; and *Batman and Robin* (1997), also directed by Schumacher, and starring George Clooney. After the disappointing returns on *Batman and Robin*, the franchise would take a long hiatus until finally returning to critical acclaim in 2005 with the reboot film *Batman Begins*, directed by the very talented Christopher Nolan. It is likely that this hero and Hollywood will remain partners for many years to come.

See also: Action-Adventure Film, The

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—Richard A. Hall

BATTLESHIP POTESKIN. It is nearly impossible to overstate the significance of Sergei Eisenstein’s *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) in the development of world cinema. Simultaneously a government-sponsored ode to the anti-Tsarist revolutions of 1905 and a bravura experiment in the use of montage, *Potemkin* is the greatest product of the Russian Kuleshov School and the best example of Eisenstein’s cinematic theories in action. *Potemkin* is worthy of consideration as one of the greatest films of all time, particularly given the tremendous influence it had on the development of film editing and on the overall work of scores of filmmakers inspired by Eisenstein’s work. Devotees of the film usually praise either its formal qualities as a work of art or its ideologically subversive messages and its status as an artifact of revolutionary propaganda under the Soviet regime.

The latter has helped to make *Potemkin* into a hugely contentious film in the West, one that was frequently edited for presentation or banned outright by various governments. In England, the film was banned until 1954 for fear it might incite a working-class revolution; even then it was released only with the controversial “X” rating. By then the film had been recognized by the film community as a classic, and was voted as greatest film in the first-ever international poll of critics and filmmakers at the 1958 Brussels World’s Fair. Today, *Potemkin* shows up in most university film curriculums, and Eisenstein is mentioned with the great directors of the early cinema.

Depictions of the revolutionary uprisings at the Black Sea port of Odessa were originally meant to be a single episode in a larger film. Eisenstein had intended to make an epic film to mark the 20th anniversary of the events of 1905, but found that



A group of sailors with animal carcasses in a scene from the film *Battleship Potemkin*, directed by Eisenstein in 1925. (Picture Post/Getty Images)

the mutiny by the crew of the *Potemkin* contained enough drama to make it the focus of a feature film. The film was based closely on the events of 1905, but as Roger Ebert has noted, the film version of the story has become accepted as fact in some quarters. After suffering a crushing naval defeat at Tsushima in May 1905 as part of the Russo-Japanese War, the Russian Navy experienced a severe decline in morale, something that the Social Democratic Organization sought to exploit with anti-Tsarist mutinies during the fall of 1905. Before this could happen, the crew of the *Potemkin* spontaneously rebelled against poor shipboard conditions, killing seven officers and creating chaotic conditions in Odessa.

In Eisenstein's version of the events, the brutal and corrupt officers and an Orthodox priest are shown to be complicit in their mistreatment of the crew, physically abusing the sailors and feeding them maggot-infested meat that the chief medical officer deems edible. Using mostly nonprofessional actors to get the proper look for each character, Eisenstein creates a collection of nefarious and authoritarian archetypal figures designed to elicit disgust for the Tsarist order and sympathy for the mutineers. In protest of the rancid meat, the crew refuses to eat the soup provided for them. The captain of the ship selects a group of men to be placed before a firing squad for this transgression. It is here that the crew is inspired to revolt by the extremely

Stalinesque Grigory Vakulinchuk (Aleksandr Antonov), a simple sailor who already has some revolutionary inclinations. The uprising is successful, although Vakulinchuk is killed.

Vakulinchuk's body is then laid in state on the pier at Odessa, and his resting place becomes a make-shift shrine and gathering place for revolutionary-minded citizens who enthusiastically sail out to the ship with fresh supplies. The spectacle of the battleship *Potemkin* and its surrounding supporters is enough to draw a large crowd to the steps leading down toward the pier. Here begins what is arguably one of the most famous sequences in the history of film, the Odessa Steps. Organized ranks of imperial soldiers advance upon the terrified spectators, firing indiscriminately into the crowd, causing a mass exodus of people from the steps. Men and women, the old and the young, amputees, children, and babies all fall victim to the soldiers. The fleeing mob is met below by Cossacks on horseback, who add to the carnage. The entire piece is masterful, painting the Tsarists as bloodthirsty oppressors, and the masses as innocent victims. By the end of the sequence, as the guns of the battleship *Potemkin* roar in response to the massacre, the faceless inhumanity of the Tsarist regime vindicates all revolutionary sentiments. The Odessa steps sequence has been sampled by filmmakers ever since, with perhaps the most famous homage coming in Brian De Palma's *The Untouchables* (1987). Other notable films that feature versions of the Odessa steps are *The Godfather* (1972), *Brazil* (1985), and *The Naked Gun 331/3: The Final Insult* (1994), where both *Potemkin* and *The Untouchables* are spoofed.

Potemkin's final reel concerns a squadron of ships that are dispatched to deal with the wayward battleship, but in the end, they too are enticed to join the revolution. Eisenstein's film about the failed revolution of 1905 is therefore able to end on an optimistic note, just as his government demanded. *Battleship Potemkin* was an effective piece of propaganda for the Soviet state; but it is also a remarkable film, far outpacing Eisenstein's earlier effort from the same year, *Strike*. Jay Leyda notes how in watching the two films in a single day, one can see the incredible speed with which Eisenstein developed into a mature filmmaker. *Potemkin* was his first real artistic triumph, and this film laid the groundwork for his later ones: *October* (1928), *Alexander Nevsky* (1938), and *Ivan the Terrible* (1944).

See also: Eisenstein, Sergei; Intellectual Montage; Silent Era, The

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—James M. Brandon

BEST YEARS OF OUR LIVES, THE. A sensitive and realistic drama that reflects the experiences shared by millions of Americans, *The Best Years of Our Lives* (MGM, 1946) is the seminal drama of post–World War II America. The sixth and last film made by the producer/director team of Samuel Goldwyn and William Wyler, it follows the difficulties three servicemen face adjusting to life after the war.

The film begins with the three veterans, Army Air Force captain Fred Darrow (Dana Andrews), Marine sergeant Al Stephenson (Fredric March), and Navy seaman Homer Parrish (Harold Russell), flying home to fictional Boone City. The men are equally apprehensive about reuniting with their loved ones, and each faces a particular set of difficulties adjusting to his old life. Al finds that he will no longer be able to relate to either his wife, Milly (Myrna Loy), or his children, and feels guilty about his financial success as a banker while other veterans are suffering. Homer, who lost both hands in the war and now wears a set of hooks, rarely feels sorry for himself, but is constantly faced with his family's grief over his disfigurement. Moreover, he fears that Wilma (Cathy O'Donnell), his high school sweetheart, will no longer love him. Fred married a woman he barely knew as he went off to war, and now, discovering that she is shallow and selfish, he is increasingly drawn to Peggy (Teresa Wright), Al's caring daughter. A decorated war hero, Fred is utterly without practical skills—his only work experience is as a soda jerk and a bombardier. He struggles to find meaningful employment, eventually returning to the drugstore where he worked as a teenager, selling perfume to corpulent housewives.



Dana Andrews speaks to Virginia Mayo in a still from the film *The Best Years of Our Lives*, directed by William Wyler, 1946. (RKO Pictures/Courtesy of Getty Images)

While the film resolves each man's difficulties, it does so without resorting to easy solutions. Al vows to fight for veterans' rights, particularly by securing loans from his bank for needy ex-GIs, but becomes increasingly dependent upon alcohol in order to mask the guilt he feels at his own prosperity. Homer, believing Wilma would be unable or unwilling to care for him if they were married, tries to communicate to her the difficulties they would face, but she proves strong and constant, and the pair finally agrees to wed. Fred plans to leave town after being fired from his demeaning job and discovering his wife's adultery. While waiting for his flight, he wanders through an airplane graveyard, passing endless rows of bombers discarded by the military when it no longer needed them, just as Fred, and so many others, had been thrown on the junk heap after the war. Rather than running from his problems, however, he decides to stay in Boone City, securing a job in construction and reuniting with Peggy at Homer's wedding.

The universal nature *The Best Years of Our Lives* was the key to its tremendous artistic and commercial success. Based on MacKinlay Kantor's novel *Glory to Me*, which was commissioned by Goldwyn, it spoke to all those who had fought for their country during the war and who had then returned home, and to the loved ones who had awaited them. Al, Homer, and Fred served as a cross-section of American fighting men, representing among them the various ages, classes, ranks, and branches of service that comprised the nation's military. Significantly, Wyler and Goldwyn produced the film in the narrow window of opportunity prior to the Cold War, when American self-analysis and criticism were still possible. By utilizing this critical eye, Wyler was able to examine the human cost of the war, whether Homer's disability or Fred's struggles to find work. The film avoided propaganda, sentimentality, and melodrama, instead focusing on, in cinematographer Gregg Toland's words, "a simple reproduction of life." Wyler and Toland rejected style in favor of realism, utilizing long, naturalistic takes and deep-focus photography over the "glamour close-ups" and heavy makeup that were popular at the time. This verisimilitude was enhanced by the casting of Russell, an actual double amputee who had lost both hands in an accident while training to be a paratrooper.

The Best Years of Our Lives was a critical and commercial hit, not only in America but around the globe. It dominated the 1947 Academy Awards, garnering eight nominations and winning seven of them, including Best Picture, Director (Wyler), Actor (March), and Supporting Actor (Russell). Russell received an additional special Oscar for serving as an inspiration to disabled veterans, making him the only performer to win two Academy Awards for the same performance.

See also: War Film, The; Wyler, William

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—Bryan Kvet

BIG. When we were young, and small, all of us, it seems, wished we could be Big. Alas, in real life, we do not have the luxury of magically making our wishes come true. As we enter adolescence, we are generally not allowed to drive, to do important work that will bring us untold riches, to have sexual relationships, and to begin to fall in love. Rather, we find ourselves struggling through one of the most painful stages of life, where our dreams remain just out of reach. In the cinematic world, however, everything can be gloriously transformed. Indeed, in the cinematic world, a young boy, with the help of a Zoltar wish-granting machine and a strong wind, can get exactly what he wants: he can be Big.

In Penny Marshall's 1988 masterpiece, Josh Baskin is a typical 12-year-old: he tolerates his mom, he has a best friend for whom he cares deeply in an endearingly childish way, he longs to be with the prettiest girl in school, he plays video games and adores fascinating gadgets, and, of course, he wants to be Big. To accomplish the latter goal, Josh, after getting frustrated by an amusement park carny who tells him he is too small to ride the Ferris wheel, is drawn toward a mysterious Zoltar machine that tempts him to pay his money and to make a wish. After some mechanical cajoling, Josh is able to get the machine to work long enough to allow him to offer up his wish: I want to be Big. "Your wish is granted," replies the Zoltar gypsy; and ultimately Josh does become big, at least physically.

Beyond Marshall's adept direction, the fairytale narrative, and the coming-of-age sensibilities of the film, perhaps what makes *Big* so wonderfully appealing is Tom Hanks's brilliant performance as the adult Josh. There have been any number of films that have explored this same theme—*Eighteen Again* (1988), *Vice Versa* (1988), and *Thirteen Going on Thirty* (2004) are examples—but no one has played the child-in-the-adult body better than Hanks. In one of the most charming and memorable scenes in the film, for instance, Hanks, as Big Josh, proudly walks about a swanky dinner party in a stark white tuxedo and awkwardly eats baby corn as if it were corn-on-the-cob. Later, during dinner, he takes a bite of caviar and spits it out; then, with disgust, wipes the inside of his mouth with a paper napkin. This is exactly how one imagines a 12-year-old boy would react in similar situations. Without question, Hanks is spot-on as he skillfully articulates the frenetic physicality and painfully joyous yet tortured emotionality of an adolescent boy.

Given all of this, however, it may be that what makes Hanks's performance most impressive is the poignancy that he brings to the scenes in which he is expressing the moments of despair that are inevitably woven through every adult life. One thinks, for example, of the heart-breaking scene where Josh curls into a fetal position on a dirty hotel bed, crying for his mother, and wishing to go home. He is obviously nervous, scared, and, although charming, basically alone in an often cruel and uncaring adult world.

Big, like most great comedies—one thinks of the best of Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton here—is filled with pathos. Adulthood, while certainly appealing when seen through the eyes of a 12-year-old, is anything but idyllic once one really arrives there; something that Josh learns in a distressing yet redemptive way. Being Big, Josh comes to understand, does not resolve the problems of childhood; in fact, just like in

the world of children, the adult world has its fill of bullies, backstabbing, and bad behavior. Interestingly, it is all of this adult mess that pushes Josh to want to go home, to be small again. Being Big, it seems, is not all it's cracked up to be. And further, we need our childhoods, if only to steel ourselves for the messiness that lies ahead.

See also: Coming-of-Age Film, The

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—Douglas C. MacLeod Jr.

BIG CHILL, THE. With *The Big Chill* (1983), writer-director-producer Lawrence Kasdan set out to explore what happened to “his generation” and their ideals once they left the nurturing confines of college. His musings struck a chord with filmgoers who made Kasdan’s second directorial effort one of the biggest hits of 1983. As impressive as its theatrical run was, especially for a film that largely bypassed the youth market, box-office figures alone do not capture the film’s cultural imprint. Its soundtrack went multiplatinum and became even more influential than the film—as evinced by *Vanity Fair* naming it as the tenth greatest soundtrack of all time in 2007. Beyond commercial success, the film earned strong reviews and nabbed Oscar nominations for Best Picture, Best Screenplay, and Best Supporting Actress (Glenn Close). Finally, *The Big Chill* succeeded in generating discourse. Several commentators cited the film as a quintessential example of Reaganite cinema and debated what that status said about the position of the 1960s in American politics and memory. Certainly, the film’s pronouncements on the “’60s generation” elicited a plethora of objections from individuals who either participated in the movement or sympathized with its ideals and values.

Patterned after *The Return of the Secaucus 7* (1980), *The Big Chill* transpires over a weekend as a group of friends who met at the University of Michigan, Kasdan’s alma mater, reunite to bury Alex, the group’s lodestar. For Kasdan, an uncompromising idealist, Alex’s suicide symbolized the passing of the ’60s and the folly of clinging to its memory.

Alex’s death leads Sarah (Close), Karen (JoBeth Williams), Meg (Mary Kay Place), Michael (Jeff Goldblum), and Sam (Tom Berenger) to decry the choices they have made, the lives they have lived, and the people they have become since college. Kasdan neither agrees with these lamentations nor works to privilege them. Indeed, he uses four other characters to complicate or condemn this elegiac narrative.

Two of these characters are outsiders to the group. Coming of age after the ’60s, Chloe (Meg Tilly), Alex’s last girlfriend, accuses his friends of romanticizing Alex.



Director Lawrence Kasdan (front) stands with the male cast of his film *The Big Chill*. Pictured are actors (left to right) Tom Berenger, Jeff Goldblum, Kevin Kline, and William Hurt. (Columbia TriStar/Courtesy of Getty Images)

Coming of age before the '60s, Richard (Don Galloway), Karen's husband, objects to their whininess and self-absorption. Taken together, Chloe and Richard bracket the '60s generation and offer an unflattering commentary on its allegedly defining characteristics.

From within the group, Harold (Kevin Kline) and Nick (William Hurt) offer similarly caustic assessments. Harold, a successful entrepreneur who migrated from rust belt to Sunbelt, finds the self-flagellation tiresome. He even questions the efficacy of '60s activism. Nick, a Vietnam veteran rendered impotent by the war, functions as Kasdan's mouthpiece. Significantly, Nick gets the last word on their "activism" and their "friendship." For the latter, he denies that they shared a profound bond. As he reminds them, they knew each other only for a short time and then grew estranged. In regard to their idealism and activism, he insists that their true, authentic selves lie not

in the ideas they espoused in college but in the lives they lived afterwards. Nick then concludes that the group mourns Alex not because he died, but because his suicide forced them to acknowledge that, for most of them, the ideals he embodied died long ago. Ironically, Nick's prognosis sounds an even more reactionary note than the film's detractors generally discern. After all, Nick casts the '60s generation not as sellouts, but as poseurs who had no principles to betray, whose politics was just fashion, and whose idealism was the painless, feckless posturing of affluent university students.

It is unclear whether these dreary pronouncements explain the film's success or whether other factors such as the excellent soundtrack, talented cast, or witty, albeit somewhat superficial, script, were more responsible. What is clear, however, is that *The Big Chill* remains a touchstone among mainstream films of the 1980s. It is also clear that the film—despite its popularity—remains an anomaly among Hollywood depictions of '60s activism, which have tended to tell stories of activists remaining true

to the spirit of the '60s or reconnecting with their youthful idealism after a period of apostasy.

See also: Kasdan, Lawrence

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—Christopher D. Stone

BIG HEAT, THE. Democratic Senator Carey Estes Kefauver of Tennessee became synonymous with the Senate Special Committee to Investigate Crime in Interstate Commerce that he convened in 1950. Kefauver's interest in crime grew out of his conversations with mayors who suspected that the rackets had become so entrenched that local authorities could make little headway against these criminals. The Kefauver hearings took place over 92 days, in 14 cities, with over 600 witnesses testifying. Prominent gangland figures, among them Willie Moretti, Joe Adonis, and Frank Costello, appeared before the committee. Not only did these televised hearings wreck certain political careers and advance others, they also revealed for the first time a criminal syndicate referred to as the Mafia. Furthermore, Kefauver discovered that this Mafia was entwined willingly or unwillingly with local governments. Revelations of organized crime's pervasive corruption of America's justice system captivated American television audiences. The Kefauver hearings garnered double the ratings of the previous year's World Series. *Life* magazine wrote: "Never before had the attention of the nation been so completely riveted on a single matter. The Senate investigation into interstate crime was almost the sole subject of national conversation."

The Kefauver hearings also exerted considerable influence on Hollywood, playing a part in the conception of a new sub-genre of films: crime movies about Mafia corruption in city administration. After the hearings, Hollywood studios began releasing pictures such as *The Enforcer* (1951), which included a prefatory statement by Kefauver, *The Mob* (1951), *Kansas City Confidential* (1952), *Captive City* (1952), and *Hoodlum Empire* (1952). Fritz Lang's *The Big Heat* (1953) belongs to this sub-genre. The Austrian director, who eventually immigrated to America, was no stranger to the subject of organized crime. Indeed, in one of his early European films, the classic *Dr. Mabuse*, he created the prototypical character of the elite criminal mastermind. In addition to making *Mabuse* sequels, Lang also went on to depict an underground crime organization in *M* (1930), his brilliant thriller that dealt with the psychological perversity of the criminal mind, and which began to define the look and feel of what would come to be known as film noir.



Gloria Grahame as Debby Marsh and Glenn Ford as Dave Bannion from the 1953 film *The Big Heat*, directed by Fritz Lang and produced by Columbia Pictures Corporation. (Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

After coming to America, Lang began to pave the way for a future generation of filmmakers with pictures such as *The Big Heat*. Extending the noir themes that marked films such as *Mabuse* and *M*, *The Big Heat* explored police corruption and a metropolitan crime syndicate operating in the fictional town of Kenport. David Bannion (Glenn Ford), a tough-talking, two-fisted, homicide police sergeant bent on revenge, sets out to bring down a violent crime ring. A corrupt cop, Tom Duncan, commits suicide and leaves a detailed letter for the district attorney that explains his relationship with hoodlum chieftain Mike Lagana (urbane Alexander Scourby). Duncan's greedy wife Bertha (Jeanette Nolan) wants the pay-offs to continue, so she hides the letter and blackmails Lagana for \$500 a week. Bannion appreciates the magnitude of his latest case. "When a cop kills himself, they want a full report," he says

to a fellow police detective at the scene of the suicide. Bannion generates a lot of hostility in compiling that "full report," not only among the paranoid criminal figures but also among his superiors—some of whom are on the take.

When the hero's pretty wife Katie (Marlon's older sister Jocelyn Brando) dies from a car bomb meant for him, Bannion turns up the heat on the criminals and sends his daughter off to live with some friends while he starts brutally tracking down the bad guys. Eventually, since the police commissioner is on Lagana's payroll, Bannion quits the force and goes after the criminals on his own, before some of his honest colleagues decide to support him. Bannion eventually turns into a rogue investigator who does not seem much different from the thugs that he wants to arrest for the murder of his innocent, defenseless wife.

In the end, Lang, harkening back to what he did in *Mabuse* and *M*, leaves viewers in doubt at the end of *The Big Heat* by troping the customary noir model. Instead of women destroying men in this unsettling film, just the opposite occurs: Bannion, who is warned by a colleague about his "hate binge," winds up destroying four women,

including his own wife, in his crusade for justice. Lang, it seems, was seeking to provide his American audiences with a cautionary tale about the dangers of overzealous investigation.

See also: Film Noir; Hard-Boiled Detective Film, The; Lang, Fritz

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—*Van Roberts*

BIG PARADE, THE. For director King Vidor, *The Big Parade* (1925) was the first “honest war picture.” Written in part by Laurence Stallings, co-author of the popular play *What Price Glory?* and an ex-Marine who lost his leg in France, Vidor believed the story cut through fantasies about courageous officers and glorious battles. In the wake of World War I, Vidor sought to explore the question that was so often posed: “Why do we have war?” The director approached this theme from “the soldier’s viewpoint,” focusing on the common experiences of American “doughboys.” Viewed by some as patriotic, and by others as an antiwar statement, the silent film resonated with post-WWI audiences hoping to better understand their father’s, son’s and brother’s war.

The film portrays the experiences of three young men from varying social classes, who, for one reason or another, join the U.S. Army after President Woodrow Wilson calls for a declaration of war against Germany. James Apperson (John Gilbert), the son of a millionaire factory owner; Bull O’Hara (Tom O’Brien), a bartender; and Slim Jensen (Karl Dane), a “blue-collar” steelworker, all follow the march to war in Europe. The social differences that kept them apart in civilian life are overcome when Jim, Slim, and Bull form intimate wartime bonds during their training and in battle.

The idea that patriotic causes can unite men into a nationalistic brotherhood would ultimately become a foundational notion of the World War II films that were made during the 1940s, ’50s, and ’60s. Unlike films about World War II, however, the vision of war in *The Big Parade* is one that is devoid of heroes: it is purposeless and wasteful. Though Slim proves himself skilled at killing, he quickly becomes someone else’s victim. When Bull and Jim attempt to rescue Slim, Bull is killed and Jim suffers a crippling leg wound. Infuriated by the death of both of his friends, Jim shoots a German sniper; poised to strike the final blow he cannot bring himself to finish off his enemy with a bayonet. In a surprisingly compassionate moment of self-awareness, Jim instead gives the dying man one last cigarette.

Although Vidor did not believe the film was necessarily an antiwar statement, he thought it would elicit an “antiwar feeling” in audiences. Jim’s homecoming, for instance, reinforced the reality that the physical and emotional scars of war last far

beyond the “heroics” of the battlefield. He survives the war, but he does not return home a hero. Instead, the war costs him his “brothers,” one of his legs, and the love of his longtime girlfriend Justyn (Claire Adams). Jim’s love for Melisande (Renée Adorée), a young Frenchwoman, is perhaps the only good that comes to him from the war. In a sentimental turn at the end of the picture, Jim travels back to Europe and reunites with Melisande.

While the film’s portrayal of lost youth certainly struck a chord with post-WWI Americans, it is perhaps the epic scope of Vidor’s film and its realistic representation of trench warfare that truly captivated audiences. Indeed, the director strove for authenticity in every scene. In preparation for making the picture, he watched dozens of hours of U.S. Army Signal Corps combat footage. He also hired two former soldiers as technical advisors and asked the War Department for 200 trucks, 3,000 to 4,000 men, and 100 airplanes. Although Vidor did not always follow his advisors’ suggestions, the combination of his ingenuity and the military’s resources allowed the director to produce a film that depicted as closely as possible the actual experiences of soldiers in combat.

Widely regarded as one of the finest war films of any era, *The Big Parade* was Vidor’s first major picture, as well as MGM Studios’ first big box-office success. It played at the Astor Theater on Broadway for two years and the Grauman’s Egyptian Theater in Hollywood for six months. After a few years, the \$245,000 production had grossed more than \$15 million. The picture had a profound influence on Lewis Milestone, who would go on to make another iconic war film: *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930). Ultimately, *The Big Parade* was not only a soaring technical achievement, it was one of the most important filmic representations of the horrors of war.

See also: War Film, The; Vidor, King

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—Jeremy K. Saucier

BIG SLEEP, THE. Howard Hawks’s *The Big Sleep* (1946) is remembered today mainly for two things: its impossibly convoluted plot, and the offscreen romance between its two principal actors, Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall. Though often subsumed under the film noir rubric, Hawks’s film in fact exhibits relatively few of that genre’s distinctive characteristics, and it can best be studied as one of a number of off-beat crime movies—along with the novels that inspired them—that achieved enormous popularity during the ’40s.

Hawks's screenwriters, William Faulkner, Leigh Brackett, and Jules Furthman, stayed as close to the twisty plot of Raymond Chandler's 1939 novel of the same name as human ingenuity and the Production Code would allow. In both the original novel and the film, Chandler's iconic hero/anti-hero, Philip Marlowe (Bogart), is hired by a wheelchair-bound millionaire named General Sternwood (Charles Waldron) to settle the gambling debts of his nymphomaniacal younger daughter Carmen (Martha Vickers), who is being blackmailed by underworld figures, and whose wild behavior poses a threat to the entire family. In addition, Marlowe is urged to find the whereabouts of a Sean Regan—the General's assistant and protégé—who has gone missing under mysterious circumstances. Before long, these two plot lines converge as Marlowe discovers that Regan is not missing but dead, and that the gambler who is blackmailing Carmen—Eddie Mars (John Ridgely)—knows that it was Carmen, in a jealous rage, who killed Regan, hence the blackmail. In the book, the General's older daughter Vivian (Bacall) is well aware of her sister's crime and conspires with Mars to cover it up, an unpleasant situation that Hollywood could not abide, so that by film's end, when Mars is mistakenly killed by his own men, Vivian promises Marlowe that Carmen will be institutionalized, while the blame for Regan's death will be pinned on the now-deceased Mars.

Even in bare-bones summary, this story line sounds confusing, and to add to the viewer's perplexity, there is at least one murder that remains unaccounted for. As legend has it, when Bogart innocently asked Hawks "Who pushed Taylor [a minor character whom we never meet] off the pier?" Hawks turned to Faulkner, who had no idea. The studio then telegraphed Chandler, hoping that at least the author would know the answer, but even he was unable to resolve this mystery. Nor are the relationships among the principal characters any clearer.

Fearing that the Hays Office would censor any faithful rendering of the literary original, Hawks's screenwriting team was forced merely to hint at Carmen's



Promotional poster for the film *The Big Sleep*, starring married actors Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall, directed by Howard Hawks, 1946. (Warner Bros./Getty Images)

drug-and-sex addiction while completely suppressing any suggestion of a conspiracy engineered by her older sister. As for the assortment of gangsters and lowlife figures that cluster around the sisters, we never really probe the extent of their intimacy with the Sternwood girls, simply because they are conveniently dispatched in the course of the movie by having them shoot each other in what sometimes seems like a particularly deadly game of musical chairs. Marlowe, of course, survives largely unscathed, and by the end of the film has both an alibi for the police and Vivian Sternwood well in hand.

Though movie critics have complained loudly and often about the sheer implausibility of this film, contemporary audiences clearly enjoyed watching Bogart and Bacall engage in verbal foreplay, and as the 1940s embodiment of cynical courage and defiant wit, Bogart quickly became the moral and emotional focal point of this film. In a sense, Bogart's Marlowe is a reprise of his earlier portrayal of Sam Spade in *The Maltese Falcon* (1941), where his detective-hero displays the same shrewd worldliness and remarkable survival instincts in the face of violence and duplicity that Marlowe is forced to rely on. This is, after all, the age of the "hard-boiled" private eye—or "shamus" as Marlowe calls himself—and along with Dashiell Hammett and James M. Cain, Raymond Chandler was responsible for elevating pulp fiction characters to a level of literary respectability that they had not hitherto enjoyed. Hawks sensed that Bogart's appeal to wartime moviegoers was in part his ability to project coolness under fire, and even when no one is pointing a gun at him, Bogart's demeanor suggests that he knows his life is perpetually on the line.

There are two substantially different versions of *The Big Sleep*, and each version represents a different stage in the editing and distribution of this film. The first version was released in 1945, to American soldiers stationed in the Philippines, and it contains a somewhat lengthy scene in which Marlowe explains to a skeptical D.A. just what role he has played in the Sternwood case, and all the killings that surround it. In the second version, released commercially a year later, 18 minutes of the original print were edited out, and 20 additional minutes of additional scenes, consisting largely of sexual banter between Bogart and Bacall, were added in. It is this later version of the movie with which most viewers and critics are familiar, and although the second edition of *The Big Sleep* leaves audiences puzzled about who kills whom, its compensating virtue is that it leaves no one in doubt about the romantic relationship of its high-profile protagonists.

See also: Film Noir; Hard-Boiled Detective Film, The; Hawks, Howard; Hays Office and Censorship, The

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—Robert Platzner

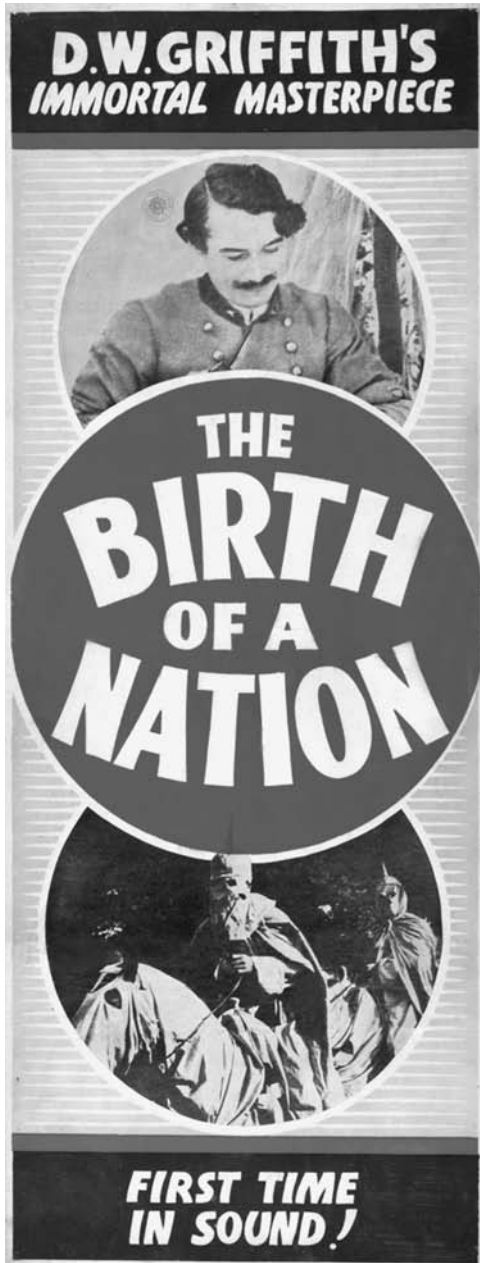
BIRTH OF A NATION, THE. In 1915, D. W. Griffith released his artistically stunning yet intensely disturbing film *Birth of a Nation*. Griffith's picture was adapted from the Thomas Dixon novel *The Clansman*, a work that depicted the post-Civil War Ku Klux Klan as the last, best hope of Southern whites beset by emancipated, maniacal blacks. A native of North Carolina and a popular Baptist minister, Dixon claimed that he had written *The Clansman* in an attempt to "awaken the American people to the Black Peril." Giving expression to a divisive dogma built on a foundation of "fervent racism and the fear of sexual relations between blacks and whites," Dixon used his novel to ridicule "Black Reconstruction and the desire of Negroes to attain political rights" (Sklar, 1994).

Born in 1864, one year before the end of the Civil War and the beginning of the conflict-ridden Reconstruction period that extended from 1865 through 1877, Dixon was only eight years old when he reportedly accompanied his uncle to a session of the South Carolina legislature. Growing up surrounded by whites who wanted nothing more than to "redeem" the antebellum South, Dixon became increasingly upset by what he believed to be the "false and biased" reports concerning the Civil War and Reconstruction that were being circulated by northerners. Believing that he had an obligation to "set the record straight" in regard to his beloved southern homeland, Dixon committed himself to writing a Reconstruction trilogy, the first volume of which would be entitled *The Leopard's Spots: A Romance of the White Man's Burden* (Mintz and Roberts, 2001).

Originally published in 1903, *The Leopard's Spots* was an immediate success, selling 100,000 copies in a few short months and eventually being translated into numerous foreign languages. Dixon now became a highly sought-after lecturer and writer, whose fame and fortune allowed him to begin the second volume of his trilogy, *The Clansman: An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan*, which he wrote in a scant 30 days. Two years later, the three-book set would be completed when Dixon finished the final volume, *The Traitor: A Story of the Rise and Fall of the Invisible Empire*.

Emboldened by the enormous success of *The Clansman*, Dixon began to think that the novel might be turned into a drama that could be performed onstage. Working on the project himself, Dixon was able, in a matter of months during 1905, to rewrite the story of *The Clansman* as a dramatic play. When it eventually went on tour, the powerful production attracted what were large audiences for a stage production and was ultimately heralded as "The Greatest Play of the South. . . . A Thrilling Romance of the Ku Klux Klan." Although Dixon was proud of what he had accomplished as a playwright, he believed, correctly it seems, that the "endless repetition of plot and scene before relatively small audiences was not a very effective medium for the dissemination of ideas" (Franklin, 2001). Books, too, he felt, although a powerful tool for spreading one's message, and one that he would continue to use, were "limited in their appeal" in regard to a national audience. There was, however, a new medium that was becoming more and more popular, the motion picture, which Dixon believed would be perfect for delivering his message to the vast population of the United States.

The problem with converting *The Clansman* to film, however, as Dixon learned when he shopped the novel to motion picture producers, was that the cinema to this



D. W. Griffith's 1915 film *The Birth of a Nation*, a paean to the Civil War Ku Klux Klan, sparked controversy throughout the country and contributed to the emergence of a second KKK. (Library of Congress)

point had been used mainly to communicate short comedic or action sequences. *The Clansman*, said the producers whom Dixon approached, was "too long, too serious, and too controversial." Dixon did not give up on his dream, however, and at the end of 1913 he was rewarded for his perseverance when he was introduced by Harry E. Aitken to a bold, young director named David Wark Griffith. Griffith, who was from Kentucky and the son of a Confederate officer, apparently swallowed Dixon's hateful message whole and agreed to make the picture.

Significantly, where movies at this time were generally 10- to 12-minute-long, one- or two-reelers, Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* was a \$100,000 12-reeler that ran over three hours in length. A cinematic masterpiece, the film used techniques such as iris-ing, close-ups, split-screen images, tracking shots, mood-setting lighting, and cross-cutting to influence the viewer's experience. After a documentary-style opening segment that instructed audiences on the origins of slavery in America, the abolitionist response to this "peculiar institution," and the inexorable turn toward the "great Civil War"—"The bringing of the African to America planted the first seed of disunion," we are told on an intertitle card—the film follows the story of two families, the Camerons and the Stonemans, as they make their way from the antebellum to postbellum periods of the mid-nineteenth century.

The first half of *Birth of a Nation* focuses on the antebellum lead-up to the war and the war years themselves. Setting the scene for what is to come, Griffith opens the narrative portion of his film by introducing the two families. The Camerons—mother, father, two daughters, and three sons—are elite planters from Piedmont, South Carolina, who have carved out an idyllic, genteel plantation existence. Masters to a vast slave population, the

Cameron men see themselves as benevolent fathers to their loyal, childlike servants,

who happily labor in their “parents’” extensive cotton fields. The Stonemans are northerners from Pennsylvania; they are led by their powerful and morally upright patriarch Austin Stoneman, a United States senator—patterned after the Radical Republican congressman from Pennsylvania, Thaddeus Stevens—a staunch abolitionist, and father to two sons and a beautiful daughter, Elsie (Lillian Gish).

The Cameron and Stoneman boys are boarding-school friends. Although worlds apart ideologically, the families are linked by their elite cultural positions. Missing the company of their friends, the Stoneman sons, Phil (Elmer Clifton) and Tod (Robert Harron) travel to the Camerons’ Piedmont estate. While there, Phil falls in love with the Camerons’ eldest daughter, Margaret (Miriam Cooper); and, shown a picture of Elsie, Benjamin (Henry B. Walthall), the eldest Cameron son, realizes that she will be the love of his life: “He finds the ideal of his dreams in the picture of Elsie Stoneman, his friend’s sister, whom he has never seen.”

The war, of course, tears the families apart, as both pledge themselves to their respective, “just” sides—“Conquer We Must for Our Cause is Just: Victory or Death,” reads a flag carried by Southern troops. A microcosm of the masses who are involved in the conflict, the Camerons and Stonemans experience the death, destruction, and despair of the struggle. Representing the unity of the families, Benjamin—the “Little Colonel”—and Elsie are finally joined together in an army hospital where Elsie has volunteered and Ben languishes near death from wounds experienced on the battlefield.

In the second half of *The Birth of a Nation*, Griffith made it clear that although the war finally ended, the North’s victory in the conflict continued to have dire consequences for whites in the South. Returning home after his wounds are healed, Ben finds the family estate, and the South in general, devastated by the war. Subject to the Reconstruction policies of the Radical Republicans in Congress, southern whites are now terrorized by the formerly docile slaves who are whipped into a frenzy by Carpetbaggers and “uppity negroes” from the North. Allowed to run free, once loyal servants are now used in an attempt to “crush the white South under the hell of the Black South.”

Portrayed as vengeful, petulant, spoiled, even lustful children, blacks—played in the film by whites in blackface—are shown pushing whites off of sidewalks into the streets, taunting white families, and acting like imbeciles in the legislative halls of the South, where they sneak drinks from hidden flasks of liquor, remove their shoes only to expose their malodorous feet, and pass tyrannical laws that act to oppress what are now dispossessed whites. Griffith brings things to a disturbing, dramatic climax in what has become one of the film’s most iconic scenes: the renegade Gus (Walter Long), unable to control his insatiable desire for the youngest Cameron daughter, chases after her until she finds herself forced to the edge of a towering cliff; terrified, and perhaps deciding that death is preferable to being violated by an indomitable “black buck,” she topples from the precipice.

It is at this point, when all hope seems lost, that the mighty, masked force of the Ku Klux Klan rides to the rescue. Cross-cutting among four scenes in one of cinema’s most memorable technological moments—Elsie Stoneman being symbolically raped by the

mulatto Silas Lynch, members of the Stoneman and Cameron family besieged by blacks in a tiny cabin on the edge of town, Piedmont overrun by a frenzied black mob, and a glorious collection of elegantly attired Klansmen desperately riding in to save the frightened victims from their horrendous fate—Griffith presented audiences with a breathtaking, and stunningly modern, final sequence. Arriving just in the nick of time, the rescue of all by the masked riders of the Klan provided viewers with a happy and redemptive ending.

Once the film was finished, Griffith graced it with a new name, changing the picture's title from *The Clansman* to *The Birth of a Nation*. This was necessary, it seems, because in Griffith's mind, and certainly in Dixon's, this was precisely what this vastly important narrative was about: "the creation of a new nation after years of struggle and division, a nation of Northern and Southern whites united 'in common defence of their Aryan birthright,' with the vigilante riders of the Klan as their symbol" (Sklar, 1994).

Although the reaction to *The Birth of a Nation* was positive when it was initially screened in New York in February 1915, resistance to the wide release of the film was formidable. A large number of Americans thought that the film was "a travesty against truth as well as an insult to an entire race of people," and they were "determined to prevent the showing of the film," working tirelessly to "bring about its doom" (Franklin, 2001). Many underestimated the resourcefulness and unbounded energy of Dixon, however, who worked equally hard to ensure that this film would be seen by millions of Americans. Amazingly, Dixon was able to turn to the president of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, for assistance in accomplishing his goal, as he and Wilson had become friends when they were both students at Johns Hopkins University. Dixon reasoned that if the president approved of the picture, this would go a long way toward silencing those who were seeking to censor it. Dixon approached Wilson at the White House and was warmly greeted by the president. When asked if he would attend a screening of the film at a community theater, Wilson informed Dixon that although he was interested in seeing the picture, he was still mourning the death of his wife and thus it would be unseemly for him to be seen out in public for such an event. If Dixon could arrange to have the film shown in the East Room of the White House, however, the president, his family, and the members of the cabinet and their families would be happy to view it. On February 18, *The Birth of a Nation* was screened in the White House for the president and his guests. After watching the film, Wilson is purported to have uttered, "It is like writing history with lightning. And my only regret is that it is all so terribly true."

Dixon did not stop at showing the film to the president; he went on to show it to the members of the Supreme Court and many members of the Senate and the House of Representatives at a formal gathering in the ballroom of the Raleigh Hotel in Washington. The Chief Justice of the Court, Edward D. White, initially rejected Dixon's offer to view the film, declaring that he was not interested in motion pictures and that he and the other members of the court had far better things to do with their time. But once Dixon explained to him that the film was the "true story of Reconstruction and the redemption of the South by the Ku Klux Klan," the Chief Justice, who informed Dixon that he himself had been a member of the Klan, agreed to see the

picture. With the support of the president and members of both Congress and the Supreme Court, much of the resistance to the film from censors was muted. Although there continued to be a great deal of opposition to the film, and some cities still refused to screen it, *The Birth of a Nation* ultimately opened in New York on March 3, 1915, playing to huge audiences for 47 weeks at the Liberty Theater. Eventually, the film played to audiences across the country, and although figures like Jane Addams, the founder of Hull House in Chicago, and Booker T. Washington, the influential African American leader, condemned the film, it received glowing reviews.

It was not a coincidence that the release of *The Birth of a Nation* coincided with the rebirth of the Ku Klux Klan. The Klan had first emerged during the Reconstruction period. Founded in 1866 as a sort of fraternal “social group” by a collection of southern veterans in Pulaski, Tennessee, the Klan soon became a “powerful and frightening vehicle of vigilante violence and lawlessness.” By 1871, anti-Klan legislation and congressional investigations into the group diminished the influence of the movement, although its heritage remained a powerful force in American society throughout the rest of the nineteenth century. Indeed, it was the legacy of the Reconstruction-period Klan that moved historians, novelists, and filmmakers to produce their twentieth-century paeans to the movement. This latter-day support for the ideology of the original Klan gave rise to a second and perhaps even more troubling alliance, a so-called “second Klan,” which was founded at Stone Mountain, Georgia, by William J. Simmons and later taken over by the incredibly powerful, future Imperial Wizard of the movement, Hiram W. Evans. Although still a violent organization, the twentieth-century “Knights of the Invisible Empire” differed from the original, Reconstruction-era Klan in that it attracted millions of men, and women, not just from the South but from all over America (Boyer 2001).

While *Birth of a Nation* was clearly a cinematic celebration of the original Ku Klux Klan and a filmic justification for the rise of the second Klan, perhaps what was even more significant about the picture was how successful it was in helping to develop a virulent twentieth-century antiblack sensibility in the United States. The film not only reinforced antebellum and postbellum images of blacks—Sambo, Mammy, Uncle, Zip Coon, Pickaninny, Black Buck—but recast them in what was an even more destructive twentieth-century form. This was especially true in regard to the image of the young black male, whose “vicious bestiality,” which had been depicted as frighteningly obvious during the nineteenth century, Griffith now portrayed as being cunningly hidden behind the grotesque mask of the grinning, sycophantic “darkie.” For many, including some of the most important people in the United States, Griffith’s picture became the filmic representation of America’s struggle against insidious blacks, who, argued Imperial Wizard Evans, were responsible for causing the first cracks in America’s moral foundation during the tragic period of the nation’s late nineteenth-century history. Even worse, suggested Evans, was that during the twentieth century, the “sacredness of [America’s] sabbath, of our homes, of chastity, and finally even of our right to teach our children in our own schools . . .” were being threatened not only by blacks but by Catholics, Jews, Southern and Eastern European immigrants, civil libertarians, and socialists (Carnes 1995).

In the end, *The Birth of a Nation* was a vastly important film not only because it acted as a panegyric to the rise of the first Klan and provided cinematic legitimization for the explosive growth of the second Klan, but also because it helped to define the destructive racial boundaries that were put in place during the first part of the twentieth century. Indeed, the racist themes articulated in Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* would set the tone for the filmic depiction of the WWI combat "enemy" as a heartless and debased threat to the civilized world, one that needed to be stopped at all costs.

See also: African Americans in Film; Griffith, D. W.; Silent Era, The

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—Philip C. DiMare

BLADE RUNNER. Director Ridley Scott's 1982 feature is still visually stunning, even by contemporary standards. Combining the best of science fiction and film noir by way of a novel by the ubiquitous Philip K. Dick, whose stories formed the basis for numerous other films including *Total Recall* (1990) and *Minority Report* (2002), *Blade Runner* is still the example by which all other films depicting a futuristic dystopian society are judged. Scott's vision of Los Angeles in 2019 is dark, gritty, dominated by Asians, continually soaked by rain, and covered with clouds. Harrison Ford leads the cast with his sardonic portrayal of Rick Deckard, a "blade runner" who is hired to find and terminate some rogue replicants, service cyborgs who have turned on their human masters. Since the replicants are nearly impossible to detect when mixed in with the human population, Deckard is forced to do basic detective work in order to find them. The four escapees are military model replicants who return to earth because they are motivated by a desire to extend their purposefully limited four-year life span. They are led by Roy, played with terrifying charm by Rutger Hauer, and they have begun to develop human emotions they are not prepared to process. Further complicating matters is the fact that Roy has developed a romantic relationship with Pris (Daryl Hannah), a "pleasure model" replicant.

Blade Runner was one of the first features to have a "director's cut," and releases of the various versions have forced fans and critics alike to reassess their perspectives on

the film. Critical responses to the film were mixed when it opened in 1982, but became more positive with rereleases of the original film and releases of Scott's different director's cuts. Early influential critics such as Pauline Kael and Roger Ebert derided the inhumanity of the original film, with the former concluding that the picture had not been "thought out in human terms" and the latter suggesting that *Blade Runner* is comprised of "dreams of mechanical men." By the time the film was rereleased in 2007, however, Ebert, buoyed by 25 years of *Blade Runner*-influenced cinema, embraced it as part of the modern cinematic canon.

One of the disquieting paradoxes of the film, especially Scott's first director's cut, concerns the question of whether or not Deckard is a replicant. A close viewing of this version shows that Deckard may very well not be human, although we can never quite be sure. Clues to the fact that he is, indeed, a replicant are scattered throughout the film: the pictures in his apartment are evocative of a bygone era because they are fabrications based on his implanted memories; the police suggest that Deckard is needed to track down the replicants because he is undoubtedly the best "man" for the job, but it is clear that he, like the replicants, is expendable; and the beautiful replicant Rachel, who believes that she is human, questions Deckard as to whether or not he has ever taken the replicant test or killed a human by mistake—all clearly signs that the audience should question Deckard's humanity. The film, it seems, continually blurs the boundaries between what is human and what replicates humanity.

Blade Runner also functions, it may be argued, as a moral parable. The replicants, in the metaphorical role of so many of America's human Others, come to Earth precisely because it is the only place where they stand a chance of extending their lives. Having achieved a sense of self-awareness, they are desperate to escape their preordained fate. In the end, however, they still must be eliminated. There is a climactic moment of Christlike redemption, though. In an attempt to prevent his systems from shutting down, Roy, representing the crucified Christ, pierces his palm with a nail and "for-gives" Deckard before he expires. As Roy's systems shut down, bringing on his own nonhuman brand of death, his "soul" is symbolically released in the form of a dove who floats upward, giving us a glimpse of the only patch of blue sky we have seen during this entire dark film. Whether moving toward a sort of heaven, or merely toward oblivion, we are left to decide.

See also: Action-Adventure, The; Film Noir; Science Fiction Film, The; Scott, Ridley

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—James M. Brandon

BLAIR WITCH PROJECT, THE. *The Blair Witch Project* (1999) is a horror film with the look and feel of a documentary shot with a handycam. In this unique work, three young filmmakers lose their way in the woods near Burkittsville, Maryland, while making a documentary about their search for the legendary Blair Witch. *The Blair Witch Project* created a stir because of its alternative style, cult status, and small budget. For movie audiences today, the shaky camera movement, extensive use of oblique angles, and the self-conscious use of equipment are not quite as startling given that more recent films, such as *Cloverfield* (2008) and *District 9* (2009), make use of these techniques as well. In contrast to similar mainstream movies, however, *The Blair Witch Project* occupies a distinct place in American filmmaking not only because of the way it was made and its budget, but because it generated a significant following by way of some creative marketing. A website created by the movie's producers, along with the release of the mockumentary *Curse of the Blair Witch* (1999) (the latter was produced by Haxan films—which released *Blair Witch*—for the Sci-Fi Channel before the release of *The Blair Witch Project*) promoted not only the film but the entire *Blair Witch* phenomenon. Indeed, by the time the actual film was released, there had already been extensive Internet discussions about this highly anticipated movie (Higley and Weinstock, 2003). The carefully crafted myth surrounding this independent film, then, helped to establish it as a cult classic in American cinema.



Heather Donahue turns the camera on herself during a harrowing five-day journey through Maryland's Black Hills Forest in the 1999 low-budget thriller *The Blair Witch Project*. The film, a mock documentary, is about three students who trek into the Black Hills Forest outside of Burkittsville, Maryland to shoot a documentary about a local legend, "The Blair Witch." (Artisan Entertainment/Getty Images)

Directed by Daniel Myrick and Eduardo Sanchez and produced by the independent film company Haxan Films, *The Blair Witch Project* was released by Artisan Entertainment in 1999. The most widely cited budget for *The Blair Witch Project* is \$35,000; amazingly, however, the film earned nearly \$30 million in its first weekend (Harris, 2001). The production company consisted of five former graduates of the University of Central Florida, who used documentary techniques to help create the “realistic” look of the film. Significantly, it may be argued that the film was a precursor to a spate of contemporary television series about the paranormal that make use of similar lighting, editing and camera techniques to create suspenseful supernatural dramas. The use of overexposed lighting for faces and the shaky movement of the handycam are now ubiquitous in paranormal television shows such as *Most Haunted*, *Psychic Investigators*, and *Rescue Mediums*, all of which, like *The Blair Witch Project*, rely on the fusion of documentary techniques and supernatural content.

It may be that the popularity of *The Blair Witch Project* was largely due to the purported “realism” of the picture. Interestingly, prior to the 1999 release, the producers declared that the footage was indeed “real”; and they reiterated this in *Curse of the Blair Witch* (1999). Further, the film itself projects at least a kind of pseudo-realism by omitting the traditional opening credits of a narrative film and providing audiences with an introductory statement in which it is claimed that the film consists of footage found after three filmmakers disappeared in the woods around Burkittsville, Maryland.

Arguably, the cult status of the film may be attributed to the self-reflexive creation of a *Blair Witch* phenomenon through the use of various media. It would seem that those familiar with the faked BBC documentary television drama *Ghostwatch*—supposedly a live telecast from a haunted house in London with real television journalists on hand—would have approached the claims that the events depicted in *Blair Witch* were in fact real with more suspicion. Given that most Americans were probably not aware of the controversy that surrounded *Ghostwatch*, however, as well as the very different contexts within which these supernatural narratives were consumed (United States versus United Kingdom), and the different modes of audience response (Internet communities in the United States as opposed to letter writing and telephone feedback in the United Kingdom), it is not surprising that *Ghostwatch* was exposed as a fake, while *The Blair Witch Project* became the phenomenon it became.

The sequel to *The Blair Witch Project*, *Book of Shadows: Blair Witch 2* (2000), directed by documentary filmmaker Joe Berlinger did not enjoy the financial or critical success of its predecessor. Oddly enough, the storyline focused on a group of people examining the fandom surrounding *The Blair Witch Project*, and the widespread public interest in the legend of a witch near Burkittsville. While the film’s premise of self-consciously examining the concept of cult films in general is an interesting example of intertextual play, the sequel lacked the aesthetic minimalism of the first film; instead it tried to make the Blair witch more tangible and sensationalistic by including depictions of violence and gore more commonly associated with the typical horror film. In the end, then, it may be that the horror of *Book of Shadows* was just too imagistically

present; what was lacking, perhaps, was a space for what can only be imagined—which, most would agree, is always far more frightening.

See also: Independent Film, The

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—Karin Beeler

BLUE VELVET. *Blue Velvet* (1986), written and directed by David Lynch, is a mixed genre offering, surrealistically amalgamating film noir and elements of mystery and art films. The title of the picture is borrowed from Bobby Vinton's 1963 song, which is incorporated into the story when the mysterious Dorothy Vallens (Isabella Rossellini) sings the tune in a bar while the creepy Frank Booth (Dennis Hopper) holds in his hand a piece of blue velvet he has cut from the singer's robe. The film became notorious for its perverse depiction of sexuality, and for the return of Lynch's peculiar directorial style, both in terms of cinematography and narrative, which some thought he had abandoned in making such critical and commercial failures as *Dune* (1984).

The narrative of *Blue Velvet* revolves around a kidnapping case: Dorothy's husband and son are held captive by Frank. The plot is set in motion when Jeffrey Beaumont (Kyle MacLachlan) arrives home from college to check on his father, who has suffered a stroke. Leaving the hospital after visiting his father, Jeffrey discovers a severed ear in a vacant lot. He picks up the ear, takes it to the police, and an investigation ensues. Jeffrey meets Sandy (Laura Dern), the daughter of the detective assigned to the case, and they decide to start a private investigation into the life of the enigmatic Dorothy. As they delve deeper into the mystery, Jeffrey and Sandy find themselves embroiled in an otherworldly case marked by sexual perversion, fear, aggression, and desire. The story concludes with a somewhat uneasy "happy ending," with Dorothy reunited with her son, Sandy and Jeffrey together, and the problem of the ear resolved—it turns out that it belonged to Dorothy's deceased husband.

Blue Velvet is replete with psychoanalytic themes. Freud's notion of the "primal scene," for instance—a foundational element of the Oedipal drama during which the child witnesses a parental moment of copulation—is literally played out in a sequence

in which Jeffery, hiding in a closet and peeping out through the lamellas of the door, observes a particularly aggressive sexual encounter between Frank and Dorothy. Abounding in disturbing expressions of sadism, masochism, and voyeurism, the film, says film scholar Laura Mulvey, marks out a “site of the strange persistence of the Oedipus myth [in] twentieth-century popular culture” (Mulvey, 1996). Beyond being woven through with psychoanalytic themes, *Blue Velvet* is also characterized by numerous noir elements. Jeffery, for instance, whose own moral standards are seriously called into question throughout the film, finds himself powerfully drawn to Dorothy, the older woman representative of the dangerous, raven-haired femme fatale, while he is also carrying on his relationship with the innocent, much younger, flaxen-haired Sandy. Literally framing his characters—almost trapping them, one might say—within a darkly lit, high-contrast cinematographic world, he gives them the eerily ambiguous feel of classic film noir figures.

Several of what would become Lynch’s directorial trademarks are already present in *Blue Velvet*: the presence of the mysterious Yellow Man, for instance, who is the forerunner of other enigmatic characters—dwarves, giants—scattered throughout both subsequent movies (*Lost Highway* [1997] and *Mulholland Drive* [2001]) and episodes of his widely acclaimed television series, *Twin Peaks* (1990–91). Although it is not always clear what Lynch is attempting to do in this picture—a feature of all his work, it seems—*Blue Velvet* nevertheless remains provocative filmmaking.

See also: Lynch, David

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—Zoltán Dragon

BOND FILMS, THE. Before the advent of the James Bond film series, Hollywood treated film franchises as second-class stepchildren. Virtually every film series with recurring characters—Twentieth Century-Fox’s *Charlie Chan* or Universal’s *Sherlock Holmes*, for example—was comprised of low-budget B-movie offerings. Hollywood maintained this practice until 1962, when United Artists released the first Bond film and changed the way cinematic franchises were made.

“My name is Bond. James Bond.” Sean Connery uttered those immortal words in the first 007 extravaganza, 1962s *Dr. No*, and Her Majesty’s least anonymous secret agent has since rarely been out of the limelight. Adapted by Albert R. Broccoli and Harry Saltzman from novels written by former British navy intelligence officer Ian Fleming, the Bond films were forged in the crucible of the Cold War. Interestingly, though, Bond producers refused to demonize the Soviet Union. Indeed, the USSR

played only a minor role in the first seven Bond pictures, with the infamous Soviet security agency KGB replaced by the criminal organization SPECTRE, the Special Executive for Counterespionage, Terrorist, Revenge and Execution. In fact, although the Soviets were visible in Bond movies, they were not villains. SPECTRE tried to pit America against the Soviets in *You Only Live Twice*, while SPECTRE employed Soviet defectors to dupe a KGB agent in *From Russia with Love* to kill 007. During the Roger Moore era (1973–1985), the Bonds included more Soviet characters, but they never qualified as mortal enemies. The KGB joined forces with British Intelligence in *The Spy Who Loved Me*; exposed a renegade Kremlin general committed to trigger World War III in *Octopussy*; and tried to eliminate a villain who threatened global security in *A View to a Kill*. One Bond villain actually snubbed the communists—Dr. No turned his nose up at both factions: “East and west, merely points on the compass.”

Although Saltzman sold his half of the franchise in the 1970s, the Broccoli family has maintained its hold on James Bond. Since the series started, the producers have shifted the emphasis rather haphazardly between gritty realism and science fiction fantasy. Ironically, Bond was first incarnated as an American. An hour-long CBS-TV adaptation of *Casino Royale* in 1956 as an episode in its anthology series *Climax!* cast Broadway actor Barry Nelson as “Card Sense” Jimmy Bond. The Nelson Bond, however, made no impression. Aside from Fleming’s novels, Bond disappeared for eight years. After several false starts, Fleming’s hero made his big-screen debut in director Terence Young’s *Dr. No*. Saltzman and Broccoli had persuaded reluctant United Artists’ executives to give them a million dollars. Scenarist Richard Maibaum, who wrote 13 Bond movies, created the basic formula. Some act of violence is perpetrated against a British subject or some mysterius entity threatens the integrity of Her Majesty’s Government, and British Intelligence dispatches 007 to sort things out.

Although in today’s global cinematic marketplace it may seem odd, United Artists worried that American audiences would snub a movie with “a Limey truck driver playing the lead.” Peter Hunt, who edited the first five films in the series and then directed the sixth Bond, *On Her Majesty’s Secret Service*, remembered the studio’s contempt for *Dr. No*: “United Artists didn’t like it at all, quite frankly. They thought it was a piece of rubbish.” The studio held no premiere for *Dr. No* and distributed it without fanfare to drive-in movie theaters and in second-run Midwestern cinemas. *Dr. No*’s success surprised everybody, including UA studio heads and Saltzman and Broccoli. Hunt elaborated, “We certainly didn’t think this was going to be a series—we thought it was just a onetime thriller.” Sean Connery attributed the runaway success of Bond pictures to “a lot of sex, a lot of color, but all tastefully done . . . sort of sadism for the entire family” (Giammarco, 2002).

President John F. Kennedy bolstered Fleming’s book sales when he said he enjoyed the novel *From Russia with Love*, and Saltzman and Broccoli adapted it as the second 007 caper. In 1963, *From Russia with Love* proved Fleming’s exotic mixture of “sex, sadism, and snobbery” was no fluke. *Goldfinger* (1964) erased any trepidation about the profitability of the Bond franchise. Moreover, *Goldfinger* triggered “Bondmania.” James Bond amounted to “a truly international phenomenon.” *Time* magazine

recognized 007 as “the biggest mass-cult hero of the decade.” Italians referred to him colloquially as ‘Mr. Kiss Kiss Bang Bang.’ *Thunderball* (1965) made even more money than *Goldfinger*.

Competitors rushed to imitate these outrageous, fast-paced, gadget-riddled, global spectacles featuring trendy violence, witty dialogue, voluptuous damsels, and megalomaniacal villains. ‘Bondmania’ peaked with Connery’s last Bond, *You Only Live Twice* (1967). *On Her Majesty’s Secret Service* (1969) introduced unknown Australian actor George Lazenby as Connery’s replacement. Broccoli and Saltzman decided to curb the science fiction technology and resume the realism of *From Russia with Love*, but *OHMSS* performed poorly. Not only did Connery return for *Diamonds Are Forever* (1971), but the producers reinstated science fiction technology. Roger Moore of TV’s *The Saint* replaced Connery after the latter refused to star in *Live and Let Die* (1973). Saltzman sold his interest in the Bonds and left Broccoli as sole producer after *The Man with the Golden Gun* (1975). Roger Moore appropriated the Bond persona with *The Spy Who Loved Me* (1977) and *Moonraker* (1979). The success of these Bonds grew out of Broccoli’s love for science fiction technology. Indeed, the success of *Star Wars* had prompted Broccoli to put Bond into orbit. Conversely, these excesses later motivated Broccoli to swing from fantasy back to realism with the gadget-less *For Your Eyes Only* (1981), the nuclear warhead-themed *Octopussy* (1983), and 1985’s *A View to a Kill*. When *A View to a Kill* failed, Moore withdrew from the role.

Bond proved profitable enough with Timothy Dalton in *The Living Daylights* (1987), but the bottom fell out of 1989’s ultrarealistic *License to Kill*. Broccoli had shoved the Bond formula about as far right as he could while embracing the current antipathy for South American drug czars. After Broccoli’s death, his daughter Barbara and his stepson Michael G. Wilson altered the Bond series irrevocably because of escalating budgets. Like *Moonraker*, *Die Another Day* took the franchise in the direction of sci-fi technology with an invisible car. Now, Broccoli and Wilson followed in the footsteps of George Lucas, who had rebooted his *Star Wars* franchise with a trilogy of prequels. Similarly, Broccoli and Wilson rebooted Bond with Daniel Craig as 007 in the prequel/sequel *Casino Royale* (2006), which contained a first-ever black-and-white pre-credit sequence. Broccoli and Wilson showed how Bond obtained his license to kill. Craig’s Bond differed from previous Bonds. Craig played Bond as a sinister, trigger-happy thug who shot first and asked questions later. He still drank vodka martinis, but the producers downplayed Bond’s traditional characteristics. Nevertheless, *Casino Royale* and Craig won audiences over, and the success of Bond’s adaptability continued with *Quantum of Solace* (2008). Critics, however, attacked *Quantum of Solace* for relieving Bond of his identity, suggesting that the film’s producers had simply tried to imitate the streamlined *Bourne* trilogy, in which Matt Damon stars as the laconic everyman—albeit with almost superhuman, super-spy abilities—Jason Bourne. The producers, critics lamented, suppressed everything that had made James Bond revolutionary.

The Bond villains—and what would Bond be without his villains—were fit into various molds. They could be megalomaniacal, like Dr. No in *Dr. No*; Ernst Stavro Blofeld in *Thunderball*, *You Only Live Twice*, *On Her Majesty’s Secret Service*, and

Diamonds Are Forever; and Eliot Carver in *Tomorrow Never Dies*—all of whom want to initiate war between the East and West so that the superpowers will eventually destroy each other. The incredibly ruthless Karl Stromberg in *The Spy Who Loved Me* and Hugo Drax in *Moonraker* are so bent on domination that they actually want to destroy civilization and begin anew. The remaining villains—Mr. Big in *Live and Let Die*, Goldfinger in *Goldfinger*, Francisco Scaramanga in *The Man with the Golden Gun*, Aristotle Kristatos in *For Your Eyes Only*, Max Zorin in *A View to a Kill*, General Georgi Koskov in *The Living Daylights*, Franz Sanchez in *License to Kill*, and Alec Trevelyan in *GoldenEye*—are coldblooded indeed, but showed no interest in global domination. *The World Is Not Enough* was the first Bond to promote a female villain, Elektra King, who proved more powerful than her co-villain, the anarchist Renard.

Fleming's suave but indestructible protagonist remains the most popular super-spy hero in cinematic history. The release of more than 20 films has kept Fleming's best-selling novels in print, and Bond has received a new lease on life with recently penned action novels and the advent of increasingly sophisticated video games. The release of each new 007 picture qualifies as a worldwide media event. Indeed, James Bond's longevity—a Cold Warrior who still exists in the early twenty-first century—testifies to his and his fans' adaptability.

See also: Action-Adventure Film, The; Hard-Boiled Detective Film, The

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—Van Roberts

BONNIE AND CLYDE. Director Arthur Penn sets *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) in motion by flicking through—as if he were using a slide projector—a series of grainy, sepia-toned photographs that are intercut with the picture's opening credits, which themselves turn from white to blood red as we read them on the screen. The rapidly displayed snapshots purport to be family photos of the legendary outlaws, although it is difficult to tell, especially because Penn offers us two final images in the series, one each of Bonnie and Clyde, with informational captions, that are really pictures of Faye Dunaway and Warren Beatty—the actors playing the film roles—dressed up as Bonnie and Clyde. Penn, it seems, is teasing us a bit with this intriguing opening,

playing with the myth of the real Bonnie and Clyde in the process of creating his own fictional account.

That Penn would choose to introduce *Bonnie and Clyde* by way of this cinematic sleight-of-hand makes perfect sense if one considers that the picture's screenwriters, Robert Benton and David Newman, had originally taken their script to France and shopped it to the avant-garde filmmakers François Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard. Although both Truffaut and Godard were intrigued, each finally passed on the project due to complications related to their respective shooting schedules. Instead, Penn, a little-known American director with only three films to his credit, was tapped to make the picture. Ironically, however, Penn turned out to be an inspired choice for the project, even though his only cinematic success to that point had come with the very traditional 1962 offering

The Miracle Worker, which was nothing like the films being made in France by directors such as Truffaut and Godard. Oddly enough, though, his other two films—the box-office failures *The Left Handed Gun* (1958) and *Mickey One* (1965)—had resonances with the iconoclastic filmmaking of what was being called French New Wave cinema. *The Left Handed Gun*, for instance—a biopic about Billy the Kid—although technically traditional and released right at the beginning of the French New Wave era, was still a revisionist western that sought to deconstruct the myth of the heroic—or in this case, the antiheroic—westerner; while *Mickey One*, which most viewers—the few that saw it—admittedly found incomprehensible, was characterized by a unique use of camera, lighting, and mise-en-scène, albeit, for Penn, still in embryonic form in 1965. Almost everything that ultimately made *Bonnie and Clyde* an example of brilliant filmmaking, then—what made it so much like the best of French New Wave filmmaking—was there in inchoate form in *The Left Handed Gun* and *Mickey One*, waiting, as it were, to be drawn together by Penn into a cinematic whole.



Actors Faye Dunaway and Warren Beatty in a scene from the 1967 film *Bonnie and Clyde*, directed by Arthur Penn. The movie won two Academy Awards. (Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images)

One notices from the very beginning of the narrative portion of *Bonnie and Clyde* the influence of the work of Truffaut and Godard—in particular Truffaut's *Shoot the Piano Player* (1960) and *Jules and Jim* (1962) and Godard's *Breathless* (1960). Penn, for instance—working with, it must be noted, his gifted editor on this film, Dede Allen—flaunts convention by providing his viewers with a nontraditional establishing shot. Instead of the usual framing shot filmed from a distance, Penn opens the narrative portion of *Bonnie and Clyde* with an extreme close-up of Bonnie—actually of just her lips. When the camera pulls back, we realize that she is in a small, spare, bedroom. Naked, save for her sheer panties, she moves about the room like a sexually charged, caged animal. Flopping on the bed, she pounds at its metal frame, the bars of which look very much like those of a prison cell. Penn makes the situation clear: Bonnie is dying—literally in the end—to be free from her oppressive surroundings.

Wandering over to her second-floor window, she gazes out at the bucolic scene unfolding below. Spying a strange man lurking around a car parked in front of the building, she inquires, in a scolding tone, what he is doing around her mamma's car. Startled, the man—it turns out to be Clyde—looks up, and their eyes lock. As film historian Robert Kolker points out, once Penn has connected the characters in these opening scenes by way of their flirtatious gaze—for her part, Bonnie remains provocatively bare during the exchange—they are never again apart throughout the rest of the picture (Kolker, 2002). Clyde is rendered childishly silent as he stares up at Bonnie, unsure of how to explain his actions. Bonnie orders him to stay where he is. Hastily throwing a thin dress over herself, she storms down the stairs leading outside the building. Interestingly, Penn shoots Bonnie's mad dash down the stairs from an extreme low angle, also canting the camera so that the frame is tilted, giving the shot a strangely expressionist feel—almost as if Bonnie is hurrying into some chaotic, oddly surreal world.

And so she is. Still buttoning her dress, she moves out onto the porch. "You want to go into town with me? How'd that be?" says Clyde. "I'm going to work anyway," Bonnie tells him, coquettishly. And so the scene is set for what is to come: two fragile people, with few prospects, bound together by way of a profound sense of both desire and despair. As they stroll together along an eerily empty small-town street—in West Dallas, it turns out—Bonnie is surprised, and a bit chagrined, when Clyde accurately identifies her as a waitress. She is even more surprised—and increasingly excited—when he tells her that he has been in state prison for armed robbery, and eventually pulls out his revolver to make his point. Bonnie strokes the hard barrel of the gun, uttering only a throaty, "Yeah . . ." as she looks down at the weapon. "But you wouldn't have the gumption to use it," she says, with a note of challenge in her voice—and suddenly we are unsure exactly to what Bonnie is referring—the gun or what it represents. Phallic images abound in this sequence: the gun, of course, but also soda bottles, and even the matchstick that Clyde flicks around in his mouth. As will become very clear, this phallic doubling will function as one of the film's central themes: repressed desire displaced onto something or someone else, revealing itself in painful and often disturbingly violent ways.

Penn provides immediate support for this suggestion, as Clyde takes up Bonnie's challenge, strolling into a grocery store after instructing Bonnie to keep her eyes open. Backing out of the store moments later, he turns and flashes a wad of money at Bonnie. As he runs across the street, he glances back and, seeing that the shopkeeper has followed him out of the store, fires a shot—above the man's head. Pushing Bonnie into a car—not theirs obviously—he pops the bonnet, deftly starts the engine, and they roar off. A master at allowing farce to unfold into tragedy, Penn brings us into the car with the newly minted outlaws, as Bonnie literally throws herself on Clyde, all her pent-up passions released by the excitement of armed robbery. Penn cross-cuts from inside the car—where Bonnie continues to accost Clyde, who struggles to free himself from her—to outside the car, providing us with exterior shots of the vehicle careening from side to side, off the road and on again, forced to swerve crazily in order to miss a slowly moving horse-drawn wagon. Finally pulling off into a grove of trees, Clyde laughingly implores Bonnie to “slow down,” until, unable to control her desire, he roughly pushes her away, the scene suddenly turning dark and embarrassingly tense. Pushing his way out of the car, Clyde circles away from and then back to the vehicle, as Bonnie, with shaking hands, anxiously lights a cigarette. “Alright now,” says Clyde, thrusting his head back in the car, “I may's well tell you right off, I ain't much of a lover boy.” “You're advertising is just dandy,” an out-of-breath Bonnie tells Clyde, as she straightens her clothes and aggressively combs out her tousled hair.

Trying to calm her, Clyde reaches into the car toward the disappointed Bonnie, who now pushes out the other side of the vehicle. Clyde yells after her: “If all's you want is a stud service, than you get on back to West Dallas and you stay there the rest of your life.” Lover boys, Clyde makes clear, can be found on every corner in any town; but they won't care about Bonnie, not the way that Clyde will. They only want to “get into your pants,” warns Clyde, and thus, are not capable of seeing in her what he sees. Moved to follow him to a diner, Bonnie listens as Clyde accurately describes her desperate life. “And you sit in your room,” he says, leaning toward her seductively, “and you wonder when and how am I ever gonna get away from this . . . and now you know.” Leaving the diner, Bonnie dutifully walks to the car in which they arrived; but Clyde heads for a different vehicle. Scurrying across the parking lot, she jumps in beside Clyde and they drive off together; and so their life of crime together begins.

That Penn weaves together so many of the film's narrative threads in and around cars is no coincidence. Bonnie and Clyde first encounter each other over her mother's car; and their first explosive moment of shared—and frustrated—desire is played out in and near a car. Cars, after all, represent freedom, a way to move from place to place quickly and easily; and so it is for Bonnie and Clyde. Cars whisk them away from West Dallas, ferry them across the country, and allow them to escape their pursuers. But this is all too simple, Penn seems to be saying, for as soon as Bonnie climbs in beside Clyde in that first stolen car, their fate is sealed—they will die, bloody and alone, although together, in and around yet another stolen car.

The second stolen car, we assume, brings them to a broken-down farmhouse, as Penn cuts from the theft at the diner to a room in which Bonnie awakens—on the only furniture available, a set of old car seats—to find Clyde gone. Frightened, she calls out

for him; from outside, he walks toward the building. Talking to her through a broken window—a first instance of their being together but just out of reach—he explains that he slept out by the car. Looking around, she points out to him that “these accommodations ain’t particularly deluxe”—no grand hotel, and not even her man to keep her warm. Clyde explains this away by stating simply that “if they’re after us,” he “wants ‘the first shot.’” Instructing her to come outside, Clyde demonstrates his prowess with a gun by shooting bottles off a fence while standing on a porch some 20 feet away—impressively, he does not miss. The process of phallic doubling is once again at work in this scene—while one weapon does not work at all, the other, we are reminded, works with deadly precision.

Significantly, Penn cuts from the couple’s point of view on the porch as Clyde begins firing to a reverse shot that allows us to look back over the fence and the exploding bottles at the couple in middle distance. Although the viewer may not notice it at first, Penn’s intentions are more than just aesthetic here, as from the second perspective we are provided with a quick glimpse of a sign that informs us that the property is owned by “Midlothian Citizens Bank,” and that “Trespassers Will Be Prosecuted.” Penn makes effective use of the sequence, linking together a number of important narrative elements. Excited by watching Clyde shoot, Bonnie willingly takes another gun that Clyde hands her, and with her second shot is able to start a tire swing spinning. Joyous, she listens as Clyde explains that he will get her a Smith & Wesson—a gun that will fit more comfortably in her hand. So enthralled are they by what they are doing, that they do not notice a figure approaching from behind. When he calls out to them, Clyde spins around, gun at the ready; but it is just a farmer—the man who used to own the place until the bank took it away from him, making him merely a “trespasser.” Penn allows the camera quietly to take in the scene, cutting and panning to reveal the “dust bowl” family of the farmer, packed and waiting in the car, as well as his black hired hand, who comes strolling into the scene from out of the distance. After shooting a number of holes through another bank sign—this one bigger than the first—Clyde hands the gun over to the two men, who not only shoot at the sign, but turn the weapon on the windows of the farmhouse with a certain restrained enthusiasm. As the farmer walks away, Clyde calls out after him, “We rob banks.” The farmer turns back, his face revealing little; apparently he realizes, even if Bonnie and Clyde do not, that the outlaws have nothing to offer—they are not heroes, and their actions are not heroic. They are no more than common criminals whose notorious behavior will not change anything, except for the lives of the family members of the innocent people that Bonnie and Clyde gun down.

The real Bonnie and Clyde—Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow—were active between 1931—Bonnie was 21 when they met, Clyde 22—and 1934, when they were killed by police in a roadside ambush in Louisiana. Initiating their crime spree at the end of Herbert Hoover’s single term in office, they continued it after Franklin Roosevelt was inaugurated in the spring of 1933. By the time Roosevelt took office, the Great Depression had devastated the nation; banks were failing at an alarming rate, unemployment stood at 25 percent, and the economy was in crisis, with many Americans losing everything they had. Within days after being sworn in, Roosevelt took steps to

save the banks and to put people back to work. The economy continued to struggle, however, and outlaws such as Bonnie and Clyde, who robbed the banks that most Americans believed bore a substantial responsibility for the economic crash, gained a certain reputation as Robin Hood-like, savior figures.

Penn does not let *Bonnie and Clyde* descend into some sort of populist morality tale, however, decrying the horrors of capitalism and celebrating the criminal activities of a likable pair of outlaws. Preventing this from happening, one imagines, would have been no easy task for this talented director, especially given that his Bonnie and Clyde were played by the extraordinarily attractive Faye Dunaway and Warren Beatty. Penn succeeds, however, by keeping us painfully close to the couple as they accumulate their partners in crime—C. W. Moss (Michael J. Pollard) and Clyde's brother and sister-in-law, Buck Barrow (Gene Hackman) and Blanche Barrow (Estelle Parsons)—and live out their stultifying, banal, increasingly desperate lives.

In the film, the crime spree of Bonnie and Clyde begins badly. Clyde sits nervously in the passenger seat of a car, trying to reassure a much calmer Bonnie, who is driving them to their first bank job, that everything will be alright. Penn again plays the scene as farce, with Clyde bursting into an empty bank—it had failed three weeks before—and demanding money that is no longer there. Embarrassed, he forces the sole bank employee outside so that he might explain the situation to Bonnie. As Bonnie laughs uproariously, Clyde fires bullets through the bank window, as if somehow this will resolve his criminal impotence. True to form, Penn allows farce to unfold into tragedy in the next scene. Broke, Clyde is forced to steal food from a small grocery store. Kid-ding with the store owner about his lack of peach pies, Clyde is suddenly attacked from behind by a beast of a man wielding a meat cleaver. A deadly struggle ensues, as the two crash their way across the store, Clyde desperately trying to free himself from the man's grasp. Finally able to flee after brutally smashing his assailant in the head with the butt of his gun, Clyde staggers to the car, entering as Bonnie roars away. Penn again takes us into the car, allowing us to witness Clyde's childish incomprehension, as he rails against the man who he has left beaten and bloody back at the store: "He tried to kill me!" yells Clyde. "Why'd he try to kill me? I didn't want to hurt him. . . . I ain't against him . . . I ain't against him."

Of course, what Clyde doesn't understand, what he will never understand, is that he is very much against these honest, hard-working people—a point that will be expressed with deadly consequences during their next bank job. Having enlisted the aid of C. W. Moss as a getaway driver, Bonnie and Clyde successfully rob a bank, only to exit the building and find that C. W. has parked the car. Finally able to extricate the car from its parking space, C. W. must drive past the bank to make good their getaway. Caught up in the moment, the bank manager jumps onto the vehicle's running board, hanging precariously to the side of the car with his face pressed up against the window. Penn gives us the bank manager's point of view, as we see Clyde raise his gun; quickly cutting to a view from inside the car, we hear the gun go off and see the window shatter as a bullet crashes through it into the instantly bloodied face of the bank manager, who, dead, tumbles into the street.

The scene is important for several reasons, not the least of which is the fact that it represented, for the period, one of the most shockingly violent moments in American cinematic history. Unlike so much of today's gratuitous, anesthetizing violence, however, Penn does not simply allow the moment to pass casually by, as he follows the bank scene with one which finds Bonnie, Clyde, and C. W. sitting in a darkened theatre distraught over what has happened—at least Clyde and C. W. are distraught; Bonnie seems unfazed by the awful moment, happily watching a Busby Berkeley-choreographed song-and-dance number—"We're in the Money" from *Gold Diggers of 1933*, although in the film's chronology it is only 1931—at one point shushing the boys so she will not be disturbed. For his part, Clyde sits behind C. W. paternalistically berating him, and informing the overwhelmed young man that they are all now wanted not only for bank robbery but for murder, as well.

Penn follows the scene in the theater with what is arguably the most important scene in the film. In yet another dark, spare room, Bonnie sings her version of "We're in the Money" while she prances before the mirror. Clyde nervously fiddles with his revolver. Confronting Bonnie, he tells her that things have now changed, and that if she wants to leave and go back home, now is the time. She refuses to go. They begin to touch each other, hesitantly at first, but then with more passion. Penn does not clutter the scene with dialogue; indeed, the two do not utter a word as they gently stroke each other, softly touching their lips and bodies together. Their eagerness for each other growing, they wrap their bodies together in a raw embrace—until it becomes apparent that Clyde once again cannot perform. Bonnie sits up abruptly, gripping the metal bed frame—reminding us of that opening scene in her own bedroom. Falling back across the bed, her face literally comes to rest on Clyde's hard unyielding gun. Disgusted with himself, Clyde rolls off the bed; turning his back on Bonnie, he says quietly, "At least I ain't a liar. I told you I wasn't no lover boy." Bonnie has nothing to say. Turning to him, she smiles sadly, shakes her head, and shrugs.

Although their relationship will, finally, be consummated, it is too little too late—indeed, Penn juxtaposes the scene of their single successful act of lovemaking with a scene in which they are betrayed by C. W.'s daddy, who sells out Bonnie and Clyde to the "laws" in order to save his son. From that powerfully disturbing moment in the rundown hotel bedroom, then, where their desires are once again frustrated, their alienation from each other is finally made complete—all hope is lost, and they begin spiraling downward toward their inevitable bloody deaths.

The specter of that death appears in the figure of Frank Hamer, a former Texas Ranger who carries on an all-consuming crusade to track down Bonnie and Clyde. Although the police are depicted as Keystone Kop buffoons throughout the first half of the film, all of this changes dramatically once the character of Hamer is introduced. The chain-smoking, six-foot-four-inch Hammer was actually a real-life Texas Ranger, who left his position after suffering through a series of political disputes with his superiors, and who then began to hire himself out as a bounty hunter. He gained a reputation as being fearless in the face of danger, purportedly gunning down some 80 criminals during his career as a lawman; he was the perfect choice, then, to hunt down America's most notorious outlaws.

Days after fighting their way out of an ambush at a motor hotel—during which they kill three police officers—the “Barrow Gang,” as they are now being called, drive along while Buck reads an account of the shootout. When they pull off the road beside a lake for a bathroom break, another car glides silently to a halt just out of sight of the gang. The man who emerges from the car turns out to be Hamer, and he advances on their car. Before he can capture the gang, however, Clyde shoots the gun from his hand and he is suddenly their captive, his hands secured with his own handcuffs. Unsure what to do with the man—should they kill him?—Bonnie suggests they take his picture—surrounded by the members of the Barrow Gang—and send it to the newspapers, embarrassing the big, strong Texas Ranger. As they set up the shot, Clyde chides Hamer, pointing out that the common people, in an expression of populist rage that Clyde does not really seem to understand, are actually on their side. As it turns out, they would have been better off killing Hamer, as, after this humiliating incident, he pursues them with unrelenting determination.

The frivolity with Hamer ends abruptly after the gang kidnaps a staid couple in their own car, taking them for a joyride. Velma (Evans Evans) and Eugene (Gene Wilder) become increasingly comfortable with the gang members, even sharing a fast-food meal with them. They laugh at the suggestion that they might join the gang—what would the folks back home think of that! “Hey, what do you do anyhow?” asks Bonnie. “I’m an undertaker,” says Eugene innocently. Once again Penn turns a farcical scene tragically dark. He gives us a close-up of Bonnie’s face: “Get them out of here,” she says, now with fear in her voice. Of course, it is much too late to alter their fate by turning this undertaker out of the car—another is waiting, just down the road.

Shaken by her experience of unwittingly sharing an intimate moment with an undertaker, Bonnie begs Clyde to take her to see her mamma. Clyde agrees, but at their family picnic, when he attempts to reassure Mrs. Parker that he will protect her daughter, and that they might even settle down near her, Bonnie’s mamma pointedly tells him that he “best keep on running.” Taking Mrs. Parker’s advice, they find their way to yet another motor hotel. The walls seem to Bonnie to be closing in around her, the other members of the gang, save Clyde, a cloying omnipresent force. “You know,” she says to Clyde, “when we first started out, I thought we was really going somewhere . . . and this is it.” Ambushed twice more, Buck is killed and Blanche taken prisoner. Both Bonnie and Clyde are wounded, but along with C. W. they escape. Stealing another car, they make their way to a makeshift campground filled with “Okies,” farming families displaced by the Depression. Although Clyde has maintained his populist mythology about the status of the gang in the eyes of the common people, their short visit at the camp proves otherwise. Too weak and hurt to get out of the car—C. W. asks if they might get some drinking water—the outlaws are surrounded by their campground hosts. Staring into the car—one man actually reaches in and paws at Clyde, as if to see if he is real, it appears—the people treat them not as heroes but as zoolike curiosities.

Finally tracked by Hamer to the home of C. W.’s daddy, Malcolm Moss (Dub Taylor; Ivan Moss in the credits), Bonnie and Clyde are ambushed on the very back roads they travelled with such carefree abandon. Penn ends things where they began, with

Bonnie and Clyde bound together by way of their gaze—just before the guns erupt and their bodies are riddled with bullets, their bodies jumping and jerking uncontrollably, Penn gives us a rapid series of reverse-cuts, close-ups of the eyes of each, locked on those of the other. As the slow-motion death-scene sequence comes to a graceful, dreamlike end, men, led by Hamer, walk from their hiding places behind a clump of trees. Penn gives us one last shot—from inside the car, Hamer and the others framed by the windows and the open door of the vehicle. The men say nothing as they stand over the lifeless bodies of Bonnie and Clyde—grim, spent, they are silent witnesses to the very worst that humans have to offer.

See also: Allen, Dede; Beatty, Warren; Film Editing; Gangster Film, The; Penn, Arthur

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—Philip C. DiMare

BOWLING FOR COLUMBINE. When Barack Obama was elected President of the United States on November 4, 2008, gun sales skyrocketed. It was rumored that once Congressional Democrats took office, they, with the support of the new president, would restrict access to guns. Fearing this, many in America feverishly began to build up their personal arsenals of weapons. Gun rights activists believed that they were simply protecting their constitutional rights, while gun control advocates argued that loosened gun laws had already placed weapons in the hands of some who went on to commit unspeakable acts of violence. Interestingly, Michael Moore had opened a window onto this critical, and often divisive debate, with his 2002 documentary, *Bowling for Columbine*.

Moore's cautionary examination of gun violence in America centers on the disturbing events that occurred in 1999 when two boys at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, opened fire on their teachers and fellow students, killing several of them. The title of Moore's film refers to the fact that the two Columbine shooters, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, had gone bowling on the morning of the day of the tragedy. Moore took his cameras to this conservative, upper-middle-class community, where he found that the memories of the horrific episode, and the outrage to which it gave rise, had already begun to fade.

In a move that many found controversial, Moore at least implicitly draws a connection in *Bowling for Columbine* between certain members of the NRA and members of

white supremacist groups, both of whom he claims seek to whip up support for loosening gun laws by claiming that gun ownership is a fundamental right of American citizens. In making this connection, Moore, it seems, is suggesting that *Columbine* must not be seen as merely an isolated incident when confused teenagers ran amok, but rather, that this tragic event is representative of a deeply disturbing societal problem that government, and particularly the administration of George W. Bush, failed to address. Although Moore seems to favor very strict gun laws, he is actually, surprisingly enough, a member of the NRA; and thus, he does not appear to be advocating that guns should be banned altogether. Rather, in *Bowling for Columbine* he seems not to be attacking guns or gun ownership in general, but what he understands to be the perverse love of violence and idealization of gun ownership shared by far too many Americans.

As he did after the release of *Roger & Me* and *Fahrenheit 9/11*, Moore was harshly criticized after the release of *Bowling for Columbine*. Many argued that the film was not really a documentary, as Moore, by way of his narration and intrusive presence as a sort of on-screen investigative reporter, had deliberately manipulated the storyline to discredit the people he depicted. Indeed, argues Bill Nichols, a leading scholar on documentaries, in his films Moore “reduces most of the individuals he portrays to victims and dupes” (1991, 71). Many of the interviewees in *Bowling for Columbine*, for instance, including the faded Hollywood star Charlton Heston, who agreed to be questioned in his own lavish Los Angeles home, seemed unaware of Moore’s political agenda. Willing to share their nonconformist, and in some cases, violent beliefs with the director, they appear confident that Moore has their best interests at heart and would never use the information they give him to destroy their credibility. Speaking to this issue, Christopher Sharrett and William Luhr (2005) take Moore to task in their review of *Bowling for Columbine*, claiming that the filmmaker “places himself at the center of his work” (253) and masks social criticism with a goofball sense of humor. They also direct attention to the common accusation that Moore has been violating the “objective” documentary style by representing only one side of a topic. Although the authors admit that the idea of objectivity in documentary filmmaking is a myth, they still find Moore’s haphazard way of editing and assembling his footage problematic, especially because it has inspired other filmmakers to attempt to replicate his “irreverent *door-stepping* techniques” (80). Despite this criticism, *Bowling for Columbine* won the 2002 Academy Award for Documentary Feature; and it brought in record revenues for a documentary film, topped only by Moore’s *Fahrenheit 9/11* in 2005.

See also: Documentary, The; Moore, Michael

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—Karen A. Ritzenhoff

BOYS IN THE BAND, THE. *The Boys in the Band* was a landmark 1970 film depicting a slice of contemporary gay male life. Directed by William Friedkin and produced by Mart Crowley, it was adapted by Crowley from his Off-Broadway play that ran for 1,001 performances beginning in 1968. The play, though a hit, received mixed responses, and the film was no different. While critics and viewers alike applauded the first mainstream film depicting an “insider’s” view of gay attitudes and relationships, the picture was, and has remained, controversial. Significantly, despite the film’s subject, the MPAA rated it R rather than branding it with the X that soon was associated with pornography.

Set in Manhattan, the story revolves around six gay men—Michael, Emory, Donald, Bernard, Hank, and Larry—throwing a birthday party for their friend Harold. Complicating the festivities is a phone call from Alan, a college friend of Michael’s, who wants to see him and then shows up at the apartment. Rounding out the cast is “Cowboy,” a young hustler who is Emory’s gift to Harold, and Harold himself (Leonard Frey). Before Harold’s arrival, Alan had reacted strongly to Emory’s effeminacy, calling Emory a “faggot,” a “fairy,” and assaulting him, yet staying on at the party. Michael suspects Alan is also gay but in denial, and the evening turns darker, both literally with a rainstorm that drives everyone inside, and psychologically with a telephone game that renders the atmosphere increasingly claustrophobic. The object, insists Michael, is for each man to gain points by calling the one person he has truly loved, and what unfolds are the sometimes wrenching experiences of growing up gay in America. Meanwhile Hank and Larry, a couple, are working out Hank’s impending divorce and Larry’s unwillingness to be monogamous. Although Alan calls his wife when his turn comes, his sexuality remains ambiguous in the wake of his departure.

Not surprisingly, the film is less cinematic than theatrical: most of the action is confined to the apartment’s living room and the plot is driven by dialogue and character. Also, at Crowley’s urging, all of the play’s Off-Broadway cast reprised their roles in the film, exposing a much broader audience to the notable performances of Kenneth Nelson as Michael and Cliff Gorman as a wonderfully campy Emory, as well as Frey’s finely tuned Harold. The stagy feel is enhanced by the screenplay, which Crowley left with “almost every line of bitchy, fake-elegant dialogue, intact” (Canby, 1970).

It is these same performances and words that have generated hot debate among queer viewers and critics. To many, *The Boys in the Band* was dated even as it premiered: only nine months had passed since the 1969 Stonewall riots rocked Greenwich Village and drew national attention to a more visible, militant, and proud gay liberation movement that had been brewing for years. The 1968 slogan “Gay is Good” was a direct attack on the kind of self-loathing many see in Michael’s breakdown at the end of the film, and possibly in Alan’s aversion to all things queer. At the same time, internalized homophobia is hardly outdated, and fans remind us that finally here was a film in which gays outnumbered straights, none of them is a murderer, and no one dies, by his own or another’s hand. As Michael says, “It’s not always like it happens in plays. Not all faggots bump themselves off at the end of the story.”

The film was released on DVD in 2008, marking the 40th anniversary of the play's opening. Present and future generations may find it difficult to identify with types that can slip into stereotypes or tokens (flaming decorator, athlete, Jew, African American), the semi-hidden and insular gay world, and some characters' ambivalence about their sexuality, but that, too, may be valuable. In showing us where some Americans were, *The Boys in the Band* also demonstrates how far attitudes have come.

See also: Friedkin, William

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—Vicki L. Eaklor

BOYZ N' THE HOOD. In the early 1990s, an increasing number of African American filmmakers and actors were beginning to give narrative expression to the "black experience." One example of such a filmmaker is the director John Singleton, whose 1991 *Boyz N' the Hood* had a powerful commercial and critical impact on American viewers.

Singleton began writing the story of *Boyz N' the Hood* while enrolled in the USC School of Cinema-Television's Film Writing Program. According to the director, it was extremely important to him that his film communicate to audiences, both black and white, the essential relationship between Furious Styles (Laurence Fishburne) and his son, Tre (Cuba Gooding Jr.). With this in mind, Singleton went to great pains to portray Furious not only as an educated, financially successful homeowner, but also as a stern and loving father to his son, one who understands the many pitfalls that threaten Tre (Donaldson, 2003). Realizing that Tre seems destined either to break free from his South Central, L.A., community or die on its streets, Furious is committed to teaching his son the hard lessons of life (Doherty, 1991).

Tre's family life is juxtaposed to that of two of his friends, Ricky (Morris Chestnut) and Doughboy (Ice Cube). Ricky and Doughboy are brothers who share the same mother, Ms. Baker (Tyra Ferrell), but who have different fathers. Ricky, his mother's darling, is provided with bountiful support from Ms. Baker, and with his tremendous athletic talents is poised to enter college on a sports scholarship. Doughboy, however, who is ultimately rejected by his mother, has been defined by the violence and crime that have infected his South Central neighborhood. Tre's future is thrown into doubt

when Ricky is murdered in a drive-by shooting. Tre and his friends bring Ricky's bloodied body home but leave immediately, seeking revenge. Tre, with gun in hand, goes with Doughboy and three other friends to find and kill those responsible for Ricky's murder. While in the car, waves of emotion overcome Tre, and he decides he must flee. Moments later, Doughboy and the others find the murderous crew and kill them. The fateful decisions made by Tre and Doughboy propel us toward the point of the film's narrative resolution: Tre heads off to college, while Doughboy is killed by a rival gang.

When *Boyz N' the Hood* premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in the spring of 1991, audiences sensed that they were viewing something unique. When the film was received with raucous applause and critical praise, TriStar Pictures readied it for a summer release in the United States. When *Boyz N' the Hood* opened nationwide in over 900 theaters on July 2, 1991, it gave rise to violence in cities across America. Reports surfaced that a man was fatally shot at a showing near Chicago, and at least 31 people were wounded in incidents from Seattle to Minneapolis (Stevenson, 1991). Although TriStar knew that there were certain risks associated with releasing the film, *Boyz N' the Hood* was a financial success for the studio, becoming the highest-grossing film of 1991 and earning a total of \$60 million domestically.

The film garnered 13 major award nominations, including Oscar nominations for Singleton for Best Director and Best Screenplay Written Directly for the Screen. While he did not win either award, Singleton's nominations were still significant. He was the first African American director to be nominated for Best Director, and at 23, the youngest, besting Orson Welles by almost a year. In 2002, the film received the prestigious honor of being entered into the National Film Registry. The legacy of *Boyz N' the Hood* remains strong today. Singleton's writing and direction and the powerful performances he was able to pull from his actors demonstrated that African American filmmakers could be a force in Hollywood.

See also: African Americans in Film; Singleton, John

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—Lucas Calhoun

BREAKFAST CLUB, THE. Often referred to as the quintessential coming-of-age film of the 1980s, *The Breakfast Club*, written and directed by John Hughes (a driving force in the genre—he also wrote and directed *Sixteen Candles* [1984], *Pretty in Pink* [1986], and *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* [1986]), is a commentary on stereotypical American social groups. It is widely considered to be one of the defining films of Gen X, though its influence extends well beyond this generation.

In the film, five high school students—played by members of what came to be known as the “Brat Pack”—are required to serve weekend detention for various infractions they have committed. Significantly, each student is a microcosmic representative of a 1980s high school subculture: Claire Standish (Molly Ringwald), the pretty, popular prom queen; Allison Reynolds (Ally Sheedy); the dark, strangely attractive misfit; Brian Johnson (Anthony Michael Hall), the nerdy, likable smart kid; John Bender (Judd Nelson), the misunderstood, scary druggie; and Andrew Clark (Emilio Estevez), the straitlaced, obsessively driven uber-jock. Disgruntled all, they are joined together in common cause: to thwart the efforts of Principal Richard Vernon (played superbly with over-the-top delight by Paul Gleason) to force them to write a life-lesson essay.

Though at first the five students cannot believe they could possibly have anything in common, after smoking a bit of marijuana and having a series of heart-to-hearts, they begin to understand that in many ways they are, in fact, very much alike:

often scared and lonely, in need of attention from family and friends, and desperate to fit in. In the span of a single day—obviously a much too short coming-of-age moment, but one forgives Hughes this slight violation of poetic license boundaries simply because he sets the scene so well—they are able to break down many of the social barriers that divided them in the past. The dialogue is quick and authentic, and the relationships that develop between and among these five figures drive the narrative forward. Questions concerning teen angst, self-doubt, familial and communal discord, discrimination, bias, and social hierarchy abound, and Hughes is able to open up a forum for discussion—both on the screen and off. Indeed, since its release, *The*



Movie poster for John Hughes's *The Breakfast Club* (1985). Starring members of the so-called “Brat Pack,” like many of Hughes's other films, *The Breakfast Club* attempted to break down teen stereotypes. (Photofest)

Breakfast Club has done more than just entertain audiences; it has been used in training programs and as a tool for those carrying out studies in fields such as counseling, adolescent development, psychology, and sociology. Educators have also found the film useful for opening up dialogue among members of different social groups who must negotiate the perpetually troubled waters of the high school experience.

See also: Coming-of-Age Film, The

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—Jen Westmoreland Bouchard

BREAKING AWAY. Deindustrialization and economic recession are not the kind of topics to which Hollywood is usually drawn. Although the Great Depression did generate some social realist cinema and a few Hollywood classics like *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940), the economic downturn of the 1970s inspired filmmakers about as much as Jimmy Carter's infamous 1979 "malaise speech" generated public sympathy for the president. One exception is *Breaking Away* (1978), which succeeded in part because it is a drama about American deindustrialization and global economic change wearing the guise of a more market-friendly genre: the comedic, inspirational sports film.

Filmed on location in Bloomington, Indiana, *Breaking Away* focuses on four local high school graduates and the volatile combination of envy and resentment they feel toward their more privileged peers who come from all over the state and beyond to attend Indiana University. All of the boys' fathers were or are stonecutters in Bloomington rock quarries, a declining industry that provides little new employment. The college students disdainfully refer to all locals as "cutters," but as townie Mike (Dennis Quaid) laments while planning to leave Indiana for Wyoming, "To them it's a dirty word, to me it's just another thing I'll never have a chance to be." Industrial decline in *Breaking Away*, then, does not just bring economic hardship, but also identity crisis to Bloomington's working class. The younger generation's predicament even has a powerful visual symbol in the film: they hang out at water-filled, abandoned rock quarries, where they can either swim or flounder.

Although town-grown conflict drives the film's narrative, including its climactic bicycle race, Steve Tesich's Academy Award-winning script achieves much of its resonance in its portraits of generational change. *Breaking Away* centers on the family of cyclist Dave Stoller (Dennis Christopher), whose father (Paul Dooley) enjoyed stone-cutting when he was "young and slim and strong," but has since suffered myriad health

problems and traded his dusty overalls for a white shirt and clip-on tie that he wears to sell used cars. At dinnertime, he spends several moments staring dolefully at the zucchini and lettuce on his plate that his wife serves before he forces himself to eat them. He tells Dave that he was proud of his role in building the university, but when construction ended, “the damndest thing happened. It’s like the buildings were too good for us. Nobody told us that, it just felt uncomfortable, that’s all.” The father is a figure from a time when working-class men in the Midwest had few choices yet shared in postwar prosperity and enjoyed the certainty of a meat-and-potatoes understanding not just of diet but also of what it meant to be an American. Their sons, in contrast, faced confusing choices between menial service jobs, college, and posthippie utopias out West, and saw how Vietnam and global economic competition produced anxiety about their country’s role in the world.

While much of the literature on deindustrialization bemoans these changes, *Breaking Away*, as its title indicates, ultimately finds reason for optimism in a situation in which the guys do not have the choice of following in their father’s footsteps. Whereas Mike is the dejected dreamer, Dave is the optimistic schemer who eventually figures it all out. At first, in a comedic reversal of the assimilationist American Dream, Dave embraces globalization by “becoming” Italian. He worships Italian bike racers, listens to opera, and temporarily wins the affections of a coed by masquerading as an Italian exchange student. Dave eventually drops the Italian shtick and finds a more permanent solution to the question of who he is by biking for the “Cutters” team and, urged by his father, by taking an Indiana University entrance exam.

Among the first to appear in a major Hollywood feature film, the bicycling scenes in *Breaking Away* are beautifully shot. The depiction of the sport, then not one of the United States’ most popular, in a Middle America setting is anything but incidental to the film’s themes. The focus on an up-and-coming international sport in College Town U.S.A. is central to one of *Breaking Away*’s most impressive accomplishments: It is an entertaining genre picture that provides an insightful on-screen portrait of an America adjusting apprehensively to the changing world of the late 1970s.

See also: Coming-of-Age Film, The

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—Kenneth F. Maffitt

BREATHLESS. Before directing *Breathless* (1960), Jean-Luc Godard announced his presence to the world of cinema in bold reviews for the Paris-based film journal *Cahiers du cinéma*. His first feature nevertheless caught audiences by surprise. *Breathless* remains a landmark of the French New Wave, the revolution in film production and

cinematic treatment that captivated audiences in France and the United States in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Preceded by the directorial efforts of fellow *Cahiers* critics Claude Chabrol and François Truffaut, *Breathless* was notable for its innovations in cinematography, sound, and editing, and for its play with the signs and dreams of a youth culture burgeoning on both sides of the Atlantic.

The plot, based on a sketch treatment by Truffaut, reads as if ripped from one of the American noir films beloved by its antihero. A young thief, Michel Poiccard (Jean-Paul Belmondo), steals a U.S. military officer's car in Marseilles and drives northward to Paris with a few tasks to accomplish: retrieve money that is owed to him and convince Patricia Franchini (Jean Seberg), the young American for whom he has fallen, to escape with him to Italy. He runs into trouble en route and ends up shooting a cop with a gun from the glove compartment. In Paris, Michel shuttles between amorous encounters with Patricia and attempts to secure the money. Meanwhile, news of the crime pulsates throughout the city in photographs blanketing the daily papers and police updates flashing on a news marquee.

Media are everywhere in *Breathless*, signifying the fast-paced urban society that the New Wave would make the backdrop of many of its modestly budgeted productions, and also framing Michel's and Patricia's comings and goings. A darkened cinema shelters the couple from a detective, but Michel's newfound fame speeds his eventual capture when a man on the street (Godard, in a cameo) recognizes him from the papers and points him out to the police. "To live dangerously until the end!" reads a movie poster that Michel passes by early in the film. *Breathless* captures Michel's attempt to live out this catchphrase. The rest remains a mystery. The rakish thief's attachment to Patricia is no more explained than his admiration for Humphrey Bogart, whose thumb-to-lip gesture he imitates throughout the film. *Breathless* is likewise uninterested in discovering why the young American agrees to abandon her Sorbonne studies and her work at the *New York Herald Tribune*. After telling Michel she may be pregnant with his child, Patricia puts on a record and grooms in her bathroom, where the camera dwells on her mugging in front of a mirror. The film shuns tidy resolution: Michel abruptly chooses not to flee after Patricia reneges and calls the police, who shoot him down in the street.

The technical innovations of *Breathless* contributed as much to its freshness as its insouciant mood. Critics have enshrined the film's frequent jump cuts in the canon of New Wave technique, yet Godard's daring long takes were equally a part of the film's narrative deviousness. We cannot tell when important action will unfold, or whether important action is what we are following in the first place: the film cuts from Michel fleeing the crime on foot to him riding around Paris in a different car, while a scene of the couple idling in Patricia's room lasts for over 20 minutes. Cinematographer Raoul Coutard's purposefully unsteady camerawork gives *Breathless* a documentary immediacy. Meanwhile, the overlay of uncharacteristically loud recorded music atop dialogue contributes to the picture's radical departure from the conventions of normative cinematic soundtracks.

Godard celebrated the genius of the director in his auteur-centered reviews, but *Breathless* benefited from an unusual conjuncture of cultural and economic factors.

During the 1950s, both the French and American film industries grappled with declining audiences drawn to competing forms of leisure, like television and the automobile getaway (the legal obverse of Michel's hot-wirings). In France, one solution of André Malraux's Ministry of Culture was to increase government subsidies for experimental projects. Low-budget was the order of the day. *Breathless* profited as well from demand-side factors. Declining domestic production rendered the American market unusually open to European imports during the Wave's peak. It was a new kind of moviegoer—new in that the mass-market strategies of old were re-forming during the postwar period around segmented audience demographics—that helped to elevate *Breathless* to the status of an instant classic: the young cinephile delighted by the characters' casual banter and hungry for the film's brash treatment of taboo subjects like sex. Yet, in the end, five decades have not spent the film's hurtling modernist energies.

See also: French New Wave

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—Diana Lemberg

BRIDGE ON THE RIVER KWAI, THE. *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957) begins with British troops trudging through the jungles of South Asia toward the prison camp that will be their new home. On the surface, the film is about these soldiers' commander, Colonel Nicholson (Alec Guinness), and his near obsession to build a proper bridge in order to revive morale and discipline among his battalion. The film is really an affirmation of the West's role in the postcolonial world following the fall of the British Empire. Toward the end, Nicholson reminisces about his time in the service and concludes that his life spent in India was worth the sacrifices of being away from home. As he stands on the completed bridge that his men designed and built, he expresses his conviction that this project brought a measure of progress to a small corner of South Asia.

Nicholson's entry into the camp begins with a quarrel with Saito that establishes for the viewer the significance of the West's position in South Asia. Saito tells the new prisoners that all of them, including officers, will do manual labor in order to complete the bridge before the May deadline from Japanese command. The Geneva Convention, Nicholson maintains, explicitly forbids manual labor for officers. The colonel later states, "without law . . . there is no civilization." He refuses to work and is threatened with mass execution. The ensuing scenes see Nicholson and his officers tortured as Nicholson's Western rule of law is juxtaposed to Saito's Japanese code.

The blundering bridgework continues and Saito falls far behind schedule. Eventually, he concedes to Nicholson's will and allows the British officers to command their



(Left to right) British actor Alec Guinness, William Holden, and Jack Hawkins on the set of the film *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, directed by David Lean. (Columbia TriStar/Getty Images)

men rather than work alongside them as originally ordered. This change, Saito states, is due in part to the celebration of that day: the Japanese victory over the Russians in 1905. Ironically, many historians have described this victory as one deriving, in part, from the Japanese ability to learn and use Western tactics against the West. This irony becomes all too clear as Nicholson's tour of the bridgework raises concern among the officers. Not only has the discipline and morale of the battalion eroded, but the architecture, engineering, and construction of the bridge are found to be severely lacking. These problems can be remedied, we learn in a meeting with Saito that evening, which sets the stage for the import of Western-styled modernization. As Nicholson remarks, he plans "to teach these heathens a lesson" about what Western science, technology, and knowledge can achieve.

Nicholson's officers, engineers with experience on major building projects in India, begin to recite pressure and tonnage figures, a new time study of the project, and new efficiency predictions. Western knowledge not only brings a modicum of freedom for him and his officers, but also instantly confers privileges on them. Saito watches with embarrassment as Nicholson takes control of his project. One officer reports that trees in the area might allow the bridge to stand over 600 years, a monument to Western achievement.

As work begins, enlisted men rally behind their colonel, but plans are also in the works to destroy the bridge. The British build a newer, stronger, better bridge across the River Kwai, but Shears (William Holden), who had earlier escaped the prison, returns with British commandos to blow up the new strategic expanse that would allow the Japanese improved access to India and the West. Newly invented plastic explosives are wired to the pylons and strung downriver, awaiting the arrival of Japanese troops on the first train to cross the Kwai. But as they open the bridge, Nicholson notices wires; the water level has dropped overnight. An inspection takes him to the plunger and the commando preparing to destroy the colonel's creation. The ensuing struggle almost saves the bridge. However, Nicholson, at last realizing his mistake, makes his way to the plunger himself, only to be struck lethally on his way. As he perishes, he falls forward, depresses the detonator, and destroys the bridge. Not only does the West have the power and knowledge to bring progress to South Asia, but as the viewer witnesses, it also has the power to take that very progress away. A critical and box-office success, the movie establishes modernization as the proper role of the West in postcolonial South Asia.

See also: War Film, The

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—Chad H. Parker

BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN. *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) is a tragic gay love story and one of the most culturally significant movies in recent memory. Known far too pithily as "the gay cowboy movie," the film is actually a tragic romance that subverts many assumptions of the western genre as it presents the lifetime love of Ennis del Mar (Heath Ledger) and Jack Twist (Jake Gyllenhaal) and the "destructive rural homophobia," in author Annie Proulx's words, that keeps them apart.

The story's journey to the screen was long, despite the remarkable pedigree of its screenplay. Pulitzer Prize-winning author Annie Proulx's short story, first published in the *New Yorker* in 1997 and the winner of prestigious awards itself, was the basis for the screenplay written by Pulitzer Prize-winner Larry McMurtry and Diana Ossana. The screenplay was legendary in Hollywood as a great unproduced work, even as it bounced around for years. Finally, director Ang Lee, best known for the multiple Oscar-winning *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000), became attached, and production moved forward with the respected young actors Ledger and Gyllenhaal cast to play the gay lovers.

Both the short story and the film, though released eight years apart, emerged in an historical period when gays and lesbians were gaining more, if contested, acceptance and were increasingly visible in American culture. In the years of Bill Clinton's presidency (1993–2001) and beyond, gays and lesbians had more support and many

more came out, resulting in more Americans knowing gay and lesbian people. In popular culture, from situation comedies like *Ellen* and *Will and Grace* to reality shows like *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, gays and lesbians, even if they were often presented in stereotypes, were more visible, too. With increasing visibility came civil rights gains, as when Vermont became the first state to recognize gay civil unions (2000); the Supreme Court ruled sodomy laws unconstitutional in *Lawrence v. Texas* (2003); and gay marriage became legal in Massachusetts (2004).

At the same time, of course, acceptance was far from universal. For example, in 1998, Matthew Shepherd, a gay college student in Wyoming, the state where *Brokeback Mountain* is set, was tortured and killed; and in 2004, in response to gay marriage legalization in Massachusetts and as part of a strategy to rally conservative voters, eleven states voted on and approved bans on gay marriage. Thus, as gay and lesbian visibility increased, there was surely cultural space available to produce a film like *Brokeback Mountain*; by the same token, continued discomfort with homosexuality ensured controversy, as well as the film's continued relevance to American life.

The film debuted in December 2005 to strong reviews and good business, filling theaters in conservative "red state" cities, as well as places like San Francisco and New York. In particular, the late Heath Ledger's performance as the stoic, mumbling, and emotionally tortured Ennis drew rave reviews. Some negative criticism came predictably from conservatives, who proceeded to offer examples of the very homophobia that the film addresses, but it also came from some on the left, including gays, who felt that the sex in the film was presented as a heterosexual's idea of what the "rough love" between men must be like and wondered why all gay stories told in the mainstream seemingly had to end in tragedy. Overall, however, the film was recognized as beautiful and moving as it effectively makes clear the costs of denying something as basic as sexuality, both for gay people and for those who surround them, such as spouses and family members. In particular, Michelle Williams's performance as Ennis's wife, Alma, is devastating.

Of the eight Academy Awards for which it was nominated, the film won three, including Best Adapted Screenplay and Best Director. However, it was denied the big prize of Best Picture, which, somewhat surprisingly, was won by *Crash* (2005). Critics such as Kenneth Turan of the *Los Angeles Times* viewed this as clear evidence of lingering discomfort with gay sexuality, even in liberal Hollywood. Given the lack of additional mainstream films centered on gay characters since the box-office success of *Brokeback Mountain*, it is in fact unclear how much the movie industry has been changed by the film and it may well remain singular, and thus historically significant, for many years to come.

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—Derek N. Buckaloo

BULWORTH. The 1998 picture *Bulworth* provided Warren Beatty, a longtime member of the Democratic Party and liberal activist, an opportunity to express his political and societal views to film audiences. Beatty directed, co-wrote, co-produced, and starred in the film. Interestingly, the picture was largely financed by Fox Studios, which provided Beatty with \$30 million to resolve an earlier contract dispute. *Bulworth* depicts politicians as being completely controlled by their desire to collect campaign contributions and as being totally unconcerned with the plight of racial minorities and the poor.

Beatty plays Jay Billington Bulworth, a California Senator seeking reelection in the Democratic primary in 1996. Realizing that he is going to lose to a moderate challenger, and having grown tired of politics, he contemplates suicide. Instead of killing himself, however, he arranges for his own assassination so that the proceeds from a large insurance policy can go to his daughter; part of the arrangement is that he will make a vote that will benefit the insurance industry. Knowing that his days are numbered, and that he does not have to worry about being reelected, Bulworth stops giving the clichéd speeches that have been prepared for him by his campaign and begins instead to speak his mind. In one scene, for instance, he tells a large crowd of African American voters gathered at a church that they have been ignored by the white establishment, both because they have supported O. J. Simpson and because they have not given enough in the way of campaign contributions. Speaking at a high-priced fundraiser, attended by wealthy constituents, he jokes about Jewish dominance in Hollywood; and at a staid political dinner, he actually begins rapping to the audience members, providing them with his uncensored opinions on the state of things in America: "One man, one vote/now is that really real? /The name of our game is let's make a deal. . . ." "The people got their problems/The haves and the have-nots/but the ones who make me listen/pay for 30-second spots."

Discovering meaning in his newfound voice, Bulworth begins to expand his cultural boundaries. He meets and is immediately drawn to a young, extraordinarily attractive African American woman, Nina (Halle Berry). Accepting her invitation to learn about her world, he soon adopts the outward appearance of a young urban African American male. Free from the constraints of his high-priced, button-down white world, and falling in love with Nina, Bulworth begins to regret his decision to hire a hit man to assassinate him. Attempting to cancel the lethal contract, and frustrated that he cannot, Bulworth is shocked to discover that Nina is actually the assassin. In the end, Nina does not kill Bulworth; ironically, he is gunned down by an assassin hired by the very insurance industry with whom he has colluded—the industry, it seems, fears America's turn toward socialized medicine.

The issues of corporate special interests and political corruption are of central concern in Beatty's film; indeed, what Beatty seems to be suggesting in *Bulworth* is that many of the ills that plague America arise as a result of the actions of crooked politicians who are beholden to corporate interests. Jay Bulworth, for instance, has been forced to abandon his progressive political ideals in order to attract the monies he needs to be elected to office—and to stay there. Interestingly, *Bulworth* was released at a point when campaign expenditures were skyrocketing and many people—both

inside and outside of government—were demanding that the influence of “soft-money” donors on political parties and other governmental organizations be reined in by limiting how much these donors could contribute. In 2002, the McCain-Feingold bill was passed and signed into law as the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act. As the McCain-Obama election cycle proved, however, the problem of campaign funding is still an extremely divisive political issue in America.

In addition to taking on campaign financing, Beatty used his film to draw attention to what he deems the nation’s health care crisis. Speaking (literally rapping) through Jay Bulworth, Beatty makes his point that the health care industry is more interested in its profits than it is in taking care of the people it insures—or refuses to insure. Only by way of shifting toward some form of socialized medicine, Beatty argues, can the health of all Americans be protected.

Although generally praised, Beatty’s film was not without controversy, as many in the African American community were harshly critical of what they saw as his unflattering depiction of blacks in *Bulworth*. Although many agreed with Beatty’s call for average African Americans to lead the way in breaking down existing political arrangements and pushing for a radically reimagined America, some resented Beatty’s implication that black leaders had failed their communities.

See also: African Americans in Film; Beatty, Warren; Politics and Film

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—Michael L. Coulter

BUTCH CASSIDY AND THE SUNDANCE KID. The screen flickers to life in George Roy Hill’s 1969 *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* with scenes from a “silent movie.” Presented as genuine documentary footage of Butch Cassidy’s “Hole in Wall Gang” robbing the Union Pacific Railroad’s Overland Flyer sometime during the early twentieth century, this silent movie is meant to frame the legendary story that is told in Hill’s late twentieth-century picture. A title card inserted between the close of the silent movie sequence and the opening of the film itself suggests that “Most of what follows is true.” It is difficult to know exactly which parts of Hill’s film actually are true, however. Some of this has to do with the poetic license taken by Hill and screenwriter William Goldman in developing their filmic narrative; but much of it results from the fact that the biographical details of the lives of the real Butch Cassidy and Sundance Kid are obscure. Indeed, making reference to a “real” Butch and Sundance complicates things even more, as these are actually the pseudonymous identities adopted by Robert Leroy Parker and Harry Longbaugh. Born sometime during the second half of the nineteenth



Robert Redford (left) as the Sundance Kid and Paul Newman (right) as Butch Cassidy in a scene from the movie *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, which was released on October 24, 1969. (Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images)

century, Parker and Longbaugh were united during the 1890s when Parker decided to create what was effectively a crime syndicate and took on Longbaugh as his partner. By this time, Parker had changed his family name to Cassidy and had begun to be called Butch after a stint as a butcher; Longbaugh had acquired his nickname of the Sundance Kid after serving time in a Sundance, Wyoming, jail. Successful outlaws who preyed upon largely unprotected banks and trains, the members of the gang became the stuff of legend while still alive; this was especially true of Butch, who garnered a reputation as a latter-day Robin Hood who willingly shared his loot with friends and acquaintances.

After a number of daring train robberies—in particular, robberies of trains belonging to the Union Pacific Railroad, which was then under the direction of E. H. Harriman—the Pinkerton Agency was hired to track down the members of the gang. Fearing for their lives, Butch and Sundance, along with Sundance's companion, Etta Place, fled to South America, by way of New York City, during the early twentieth century. As the story goes, Etta eventually returned to the United States, while Butch and Sundance made their way from Argentina to Bolivia. During an early morning shoot-out with Bolivian police and soldiers in November 1908, both men were badly wounded; unwilling to be taken alive, Butch purportedly killed Sundance and then

turned the gun on himself. The legend did not end there, however, as numerous people claimed to have seen both outlaws in the United States long after they supposedly died in Bolivia. In fact, in her biographical work, *Butch Cassidy, My Brother*, Lula Parker Betenson maintained that Butch not only made his way back to the United States, but lived there in anonymity for many years, even attending a family reunion in 1925.

Whatever the historical case may be, when we first meet Butch and Sundance in Hill's film, they have already sealed their partnership and Butch has formed the Hole in the Wall Gang. After robbing the Union Pacific's Overland Flyer, the gang splits up and Butch and Sundance head to a brothel run by Fannie Porter—an actual stop-over point for the real outlaws. Relaxing on the brothel's balcony, the men look on as, down below, the town's hapless sheriff (Kenneth Mars) attempts to form a posse to chase down the Hole in the Wall Gang. Hill uses this pivotal sequence to great effect, cross-cutting between the scene on the ground and that on the balcony not only to locate his characters along the film's historical timeline, but also to begin to reveal the despair that marks the lives of these fragile, dispossessed men. Initially, Butch and Sundance seem in control of their situation, as they share beers and chuckle at the sheriff as his exhortations fall on deaf ears—the townspeople are civilized folk, after all, who lack the horses, guns, and will that are required to chase down armed bandits. In the middle of their revelry, however, Fannie appears on the balcony and invites them inside to join a going-away party for her piano player who is heading off to war. "Which war?" asks Sundance. "The war with the Spanish," responds Fannie. "Remember the Maine," says Butch.

The Spanish-American War occurred over a matter of weeks during the spring and summer of 1898, resulting in a decisive U.S. victory, with Spain ceding colonial control of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines to America by way of the Treaty of Paris, which was signed in December of that year. Interestingly, Hill gives us the impression that we are witnessing the record of the last months of the lives of Butch and Sundance, although they did not have their infamous shootout in Bolivia until a decade after the war ended in 1898. Rewriting the legend of Butch and Sundance, however, such that it entails the outlaws living out their last frantic months during the Spanish-American War—at the very end of the nineteenth century, then—is important to the narrative flow of *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*. Returning to the balcony scene, we find that Butch and Sundance linger for a bit after Fannie delivers her invitation and goes back inside. Butch wanders over to the doorway and gazes at the partygoers; turning back to Sundance, he makes the following poignant revelation: "You know when I was a kid, I always thought I was gonna grow up to be a hero." "Well, it's too late now," says Sundance, turning away from him. Wounded, Butch reacts much like a child would: "What'd you say something like that for . . . you didn't have to say something like that."

Of course, Sundance is right, it is too late for Butch to become a hero. Indeed, the days of the western outlaw—the days of the Wild West—are over. Increasingly industrialized as the nineteenth century comes to a close, America has left men like Butch and Sundance behind; a fact given expression in the same sequence when the sheriff is nudged aside by a pushy salesman: "Meet the future," says the salesman, displaying

a shiny new bicycle. "The horse is dead," he declares—and so too men like Butch and Sundance. On the run after once again robbing the Overland Flyer—E. H. Harriman is tired of them picking on his Union Pacific Railroad and outfits a special, relentless law enforcement crew to track them down—Butch and Sundance make their way to the office of Sheriff Ray Bledsoe (Jeff Corey), who is partial to them. They seek to make a deal with Ray: they will enlist and go fight the Spanish, and the government will drop all the charges against them. "You're crazy," says Ray, "they'd throw you in jail for a thousand years each." When he notices Sundance looking out the window, he says softly, "There's something out there that scares you, huh?" And so there is; not just the deadly crew on their trail, but a new, twentieth-century America. "It's too late," says Ray, "you should have let yourself get killed a long time ago while you still had the chance." "It's over . . . don't you get that? Your times is over; and you're gonna die bloody . . . and all you can do is choose where . . ."

See also: Hill, George Roy; Newman, Paul; Western, The

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—Philip C. DiMare

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CADDYSHACK. Following on the heels of the successful *Animal House* (1978), another bawdy comedy hit theaters in the summer of 1980. *Caddyshack* is a film that mirrors the irreverent, antielitist attitude of its fraternity-house predecessor, moving the setting from the hallowed halls of academe to the confines of a high society country club. Writers Harold Ramis (who also directed), Douglas Kenney, and Brian Doyle-Murray construct a biting, timeless farce about social status that is more a series of vignettes than a linear, coherent narrative.

What began as a comedy about the life and times of a young caddy is now remembered for its cast of comedy heavyweights Chevy Chase, Rodney Dangerfield, Ted Knight, and Bill Murray. It is their performances that elevated *Caddyshack* above its contemporaries, and made bona fide stars out of both Dangerfield and Murray, who went on to even greater successes.

The plot follows the challenges facing a caddy at Bushwood Country Club, Danny Noonan (Michael O'Keefe), who dreams of going to college and breaking free from his blue-collar, Irish-Catholic status. Although his character serves as the film's centerpiece, he is overshadowed by his more outrageous companions. The presentation of Bushwood itself bears all the conventional marks of an antielitist view of a country club, with its mocking tone toward aspects like its exclusive membership requirements and its hierarchy based on social position and influence.

The head of the club is Judge Elihu Smails (Ted Knight), who views Bushwood as his personal fiefdom, which he must defend from those persons he deems unworthy of membership. Smails personifies stereotypical "old money" snobbery at its finest, surrounded by his intellectually vacuous wife, his spoiled grandson, and his rebellious niece, the daftly named Lacy Underall (Cindy Morgan). Smails's ire escalates with the arrival of construction mogul Al Czervik (Rodney Dangerfield), whose boorish manners and sarcastic attitude undercut the values that Smails embodies. Smails and Czervik are polar opposites, and their interaction provides *Caddyshack* with its primary comedic tension.

Between these two extremes is eccentric playboy Ty Webb (Chevy Chase), whose privileged background does not hide his disdain for high society. Although his father

helped found the country club with Smails, Webb's attitudes are more in line with those of Czervik. This mixed background puts Webb in the middle of the battles between Smails and Czervik, with often hilarious results. Greenskeeper Carl Spackler (Bill Murray) is the film's most outlandish personality. A disturbed Vietnam veteran with a penchant for marijuana and tall tales, Spackler spends his time attempting to subdue a gopher that is wreaking havoc on the golf course. This amicable rodent, with its cheap hand-puppet charm, remains one of *Caddyshack*'s most enduring icons.

Although released in 1980, *Caddyshack* reflects the sociopolitical tensions of late 1970s America, a time when the mainstreaming of 1960s countercultural values clashed with the worldviews of "the greatest generation." Likewise, the film's mockery of social elitism parallels a general populist antagonism toward influence derived from wealth and family name, a characteristic typical of the inflation-strapped, high unemployment malaise of late 1970s popular culture. The antielitism of *Caddyshack* resembles the anarchic sarcasm of the Marx Brothers of the Depression-era 1930s, another time when Hollywood used archetypes of moneyed wealth as comedic targets.

The friction between Smails and Czervik recalls the disdain of high society toward the new industrialists during the industrializing age of late nineteenth century America. While the wealth of upstarts (whether "robber barons" or "yuppies") may give them access to social and political institutions, they are not deemed worthy of such a position by their elitist forebears. *Caddyshack* is classic Hollywood social commentary, almost vaudevillian in its approach, albeit sprinkled with the more liberal societal attitudes toward sex and drug use popular with younger audiences of the time.

Audiences disagreed with the derisive film critics, making *Caddyshack* one of the top-grossing comedies of 1980. It maintains a cult following thanks to its quotable one-liners and outrageous characters, and earned its place at number 71 on the list of "America's 100 Funniest Movies" by the American Film Institute. While it is unlikely that viewers care about Danny Noonan's existential dilemma or catch the film's sociopolitical underpinnings, *Caddyshack* remains an iconoclastic comedy classic.

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—Brad L. Duren

CARNAL KNOWLEDGE. Premiering in 1971, *Carnal Knowledge* was director Mike Nichols's fourth feature film. He had already gathered a huge following by directing both the torturous Richard Burton/Elizabeth Taylor vehicle *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* (1966) and the landmark offering *The Graduate* (1968). *Catch-22* (1970), however, his third feature, although a critical success, had failed miserably at

the box office, and *Carnal Knowledge* welcomed Nichols back to the ranks of successful directors. A darkly comedic picture, *Carnal Knowledge* examines the “sexual revolution” of the 1960s, and more particularly the impact of what can be understood as the “second-wave feminism” that focused on issues such as equality in the workplace and reproductive rights. The screenplay was written by the celebrated Jules Feiffer, whose leftist political cartoons in the *Village Voice* had earned him notoriety in the late 1950s.

The story follows friends Jonathan (Jack Nicholson) and Sandy (Art Garfunkel) from their college years at Amherst in the late 1940s to their embittered and mature present (which is also the film’s contemporary present). Jonathan is an unrepentant sexist, and encourages the impressionable Sandy, through thought and deed, to be exactly the same. When the film begins, the men tacitly compete to see who can be the first to lose his virginity. When Sandy begins dating Susan (Candace Bergen), Jonathan—who fancies himself the wise, big man on campus—also pursues her, and a love triangle develops. Susan, to the men’s chagrin, is determined to be “a lady lawyer.” Jonathan, confused by her unwillingness to bend to his wishes, berates her until she chooses Sandy.

After the men graduate college, Susan and Sandy wed, while Jonathan lives on as a bachelor—bemoaning the advances in women’s liberation. He meets Bobbi (Ann-Margret), an actress and model with a figure that Jonathan believes will cure his struggles with impotency (which, he is convinced, are linked to changing sexual mores). Jonathan’s relationship with Bobbi is a tormented one, and their union finally ends after his controlling behavior forces her into a suicidal depression. Jonathan and Sandy’s friendship also ends; this, when Jonathan refuses to accept what he believes is Sandy’s middle-aged delusion that he has found his “love guru” in an 18-year-old hippie. In the film’s final, quite unsettling scene, Jonathan visits a prostitute, and must summon up an erection that will allow him to achieve sexual satisfaction by reciting a self-abnegating speech that in reality acts to indulge his sexism.

Carnal Knowledge became a source of public controversy due to its graphic discussions of sexuality and—for the time—shocking scenes of (brief) nudity. It was also the first Hollywood picture to exhibit a condom, and the film sported the newly minted X-rating. Despite the fact that the film did not actually show any explicit sexual acts, it inaugurated a new attitude toward the depiction of sex in the American cinema of the 1970s. In January 1972, the film was seized from an exhibitor in Georgia who was later convicted of distributing obscene material (in a decision later upheld by the state’s Supreme Court). In light of the landmark 1973 case *Miller v. California*, which established the “community standards” test for determining obscenity regarding pornographic material, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the decision in June 1974. The Supreme Court ruled in the film’s favor because, although “ultimate sexual acts” were understood to occur, “the camera does not focus on the bodies of the actors at such times. There is no exhibition whatever of the actors’ genitals, lewd or otherwise, during these scenes.”

While the picture was critically well received when it was released, some feminist scholars who went on to explore portrayals of women in film found it troubling. Molly

Haskell, for instance, suggested that it was simply another example of a film that represented Hollywood's patriarchal sensibilities. The picture, argued Haskell, rather than acting as an indictment of Hollywood's patriarchal values, actually succeeded in fixing those values more firmly in place (Haskell, 1987). Capitalizing on the growing popularity of Nicholson, Bergen, Garfunkel, and Ann-Margret, however, *Carnal Knowledge* nevertheless did well at the box office. Nicholson's portrayal of Jonathan would begin to define him as a Hollywood superstar, and a superstar womanizer—both on-screen and off; while Ann-Margret's performance as Bobbi would earn her an Academy Award nomination for Best Actress in a Supporting Role. And though he was known primarily for his musical partnership with Paul Simon, Art Garfunkel would garner praise for his co-starring turn as Sandy (actually his third collaboration with Nichols—they had worked together on the soundtrack for *The Graduate*, and Garfunkel had featured prominently in *Catch-22*). Although most critics do not include it among Nichols's very best films—how does one compete with *Virginia Woolf* and *The Graduate*?—and although it would not be considered scandalous by today's standards, *Carnal Knowledge* still broke new ground in the history of American filmmaking.

See also: Nichols, Mike; Nicholson, Jack

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—Kyle Stevens

CASABLANCA. Taking its cues from the real-life drama of World War II, *Casablanca* is a melodramatic tale of romance, international intrigue, and personal sacrifice in a time of war, set in the exotic global mélange of the title city. Directed by Michael Curtiz, and distributed by Warner Bros., the film ushers audiences into the world of Rick's Café Américain—a neutral meeting ground for those on all sides of the war: refugees seeking passage to safety, black marketers who prey on them, French officials representing the collaborationist Vichy regime that controls Morocco, and their German overlords.

Rick Blaine (Humphrey Bogart), owner of the café, is a bitter American expatriate torn between his lost ideals and his cynical determination to remain politically neutral and thus stay in business. Louis Renault (Claude Rains), the corrupt prefect of police who Rick befriends but also bribes, “blows with the political wind,” and counsels Rick to do the same; but Ilsa Lund (Ingrid Bergman), a former lover who reenters his life, stirs the passion and idealism that lay beneath his armor of cynicism. Married to Victor

Laszlo (Paul Henreid), a leader in the Czech Resistance, she needs travel passes—which only Rick can supply—to get him safely out of Casablanca and the reach of the Nazis. Rick's involvement with the pair draws him back into the political turmoil he had forsaken. By facilitating Ilsa and Victor's escape from Morocco, Rick is transformed from a cynical and disinterested bystander to an active opponent of the Nazi occupation, thereby fulfilling his destiny.

The film's long-standing popularity has led to numerous interpretations, ranging from the semiotic to the Freudian. The most common, however, is that of political allegory. A battered idealist, hardened through years of disillusionment, Rick stands as a thinly veiled metaphor for American isolationism. Caught in the midst of a struggle for freedom, he is forced to come to terms with the consequences of inaction, and take up his role in support of the struggle for freedom against the Nazis. In his book *Casablanca: Script and Legend* (1973), one of the film's screenwriters, Howard Koch, also directly compared Rick's transition to a stance against Nazism to Franklin D. Roosevelt's similar shift in perspective during World War II.

For American audiences, this, and other ties to the political realities of the era, gave the film a dual role, as both entertainment and wartime propaganda. An international cast, many of whom had, in reality, been made refugees and exiles by the conflict, brought the full emotional force of occupation and resistance to the screen. In one of the film's best-known



Poster for the classic American dramatic film *Casablanca*, starring Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman and directed by Michael Curtiz, 1942. (Warner Bros./Getty Images)

scenes, Victor leads the multinational patrons of Rick's in a proud and heartfelt rendition of *La Marseillaise* in an effort to drown out an equally determined Nazi chorus of "Die Wacht Am Rhein," shifting the conflict from the battlefield to the tenuous space of their everyday world, and focusing the viewer's attention on issues of freedom, loyalty, and national pride.

These emotional strategies were not lost on American audiences, who had been anxiously watching developments in Europe. At the time of the film's production, the power of the Axis nations (Germany, Italy, and Japan) weighed heavily on the minds of American moviegoers. German troops were threatening Russia; Rommel and his Afrika Korps were making bold moves in North Africa; and Japanese forces, already occupying Singapore, Burma, and French Indochina, had drawn the United States into the war by attacking Pearl Harbor. In France, the Vichy regime had collaborated with the country's Nazi occupiers and mimicked the policies of the Third Reich, including the internment of "undesirables" both at home and in its North African territories, including Morocco. *Casablanca's* premiere, originally scheduled for the spring of 1943, was pushed forward to coincide with the Allied invasion of the French colonies in North Africa, taking advantage of publicity and enthusiasm associated with the military operation.

Consistently ranked near the top of the American Film Institute's "100 Best" film lists, *Casablanca* has also been cited by *Time* magazine and the Writers' Guild of America as among the top films ever produced. Although considered a dark horse nominee with little chance of winning, the film was honored with three Academy Awards in 1943: Best Picture, Best Director, and Best Writing (Adapted Screenplay), surpassing such acclaimed films as *Heaven Can Wait* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Over 45 years later, in 1989, *Casablanca* was among the first films of "cultural, historical, or aesthetic significance" to be selected for preservation by the National Film Registry.

The film's iconic status has consistently inhibited attempts to remake it, and films that have substantially reprised the story—*Cabo Blanco* in 1980 and *Havana* in 1990, for instance—have changed settings and character names to avoid direct comparisons. Two short-lived television series based on the characters—one in 1955–56 and one in 1983—were set in the years before the events in the film occurred, for similar reasons. When broadcast mogul Ted Turner paid \$450,000 to have the film colorized in 1988, ratings for its initial television broadcast were lackluster and home video sales were limited. Critics of Turner's efforts, meanwhile, used terms like "mutilation," "desecration," and "vandalism" to describe the process.

Traces of the film, however, can be found throughout popular culture, from the continued popularity of its signature song, "As Time Goes By," to a steady stream of references to its scenes, characters, and dialogue. Its influences are seen across entertainment genres: in the comedy of films like the Marx Brothers' *A Night in Casablanca* (1946) and Woody Allen's *Play It Again, Sam* (1972), the caustic commentary of television's *Mystery Science Theater 3000*, and the adventure of the "Great Movie Ride" at Disney's Hollywood Theme Park. The film's dialogue has been continually reused and recontextualized, becoming a taken-for-granted part of American culture, and the bonds between countless pairs of fictional characters alternately mocked and celebrated

with lines such as “Here’s looking at you, kid,” “We’ll always have Paris,” and the film’s oft-quoted final line: “this could be the beginning of a beautiful friendship.”

See also: War Film, The

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—Cynthia J. Miller and A. Bowdoin Van Riper

CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF. *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* focuses on one day in the life of the Pollitt family. They have come to the Mississippi plantation of their father, Big Daddy, to welcome him back from the hospital and celebrate his 65th birthday. The older son’s family spends most of the first two acts cheering his return, while the father, sensing a certain degree of what he calls “mendacity” in their motives, focuses on the more genuine, sexually appealing Maggie, wife of younger son Brick. As the events unfold, divisive topics such as terminal disease, alcoholism, sexual hunger, money, and nihilism are examined; the theme of homosexuality, however, central to Tennessee Williams’s play, is hidden away in the film.

Tennessee Williams wrote his play *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* in 1954. In 1955, Elia Kazan, in collaboration with Williams, brought it to Broadway. In 1958, Richard Brooks, with James Poe, adapted it for the screen, with Brooks directing. The film featured Paul Newman as Brick, Elizabeth Taylor as Maggie, and Burl Ives as Big Daddy. The screen adaptation transformed the play in two ways. The first came at the suggestion of Kazan, who wanted a more sympathetic Maggie and an ending that would see Brick restored to physical and emotional health. The second change came at the insistence of MGM studio heads, who demanded that any hint that Brick was gay (and may have carried on a covert sexual affair with high school friend Skipper) be removed from the script. Debate continues over Williams’s original characterization of Brick: was the young man struggling with his own sexuality and finally unable to admit he is gay; was he a closeted homosexual—still all too common in the 1950s; or perhaps, a homophobic homosexual? By the time the character made it to the screen, however, the point was moot, as Brick is portrayed in the film as a rather stereotypical emotionally arrested son and husband, fixating on his high school glory days and carefree life with sports buddy Skipper. At the heart of the filmic Brick’s nihilistic descent into alcohol and lethargy, then, is simply heterosexual, macho angst, a much different descent, it seems, than Williams had in mind when he wrote the play.

Despite what turned out to be somewhat confusing narrative changes, the film proved to be a huge box-office and critical success, garnering six Academy Award nominations. It would not be until 1959, however, with the release of *Suddenly, Last*



Paul Newman and Elizabeth Taylor have a conversation in a still from the film *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, directed by Richard Brooks, 1958. (MGM Studios/Courtesy of Getty Images)

Summer, another picture adapted from a Williams's play, that a homosexual character, already dead as the film begins and only seen in flashbacks, would finally appear on the big screen. It would be three more years before the release of *Touch of Pink*, in which Gig Young's psychiatrist thinks his patient is having an affair with the character played by Cary Grant, and *Walk on the Wild Side*, in which a New Orleans madam is suspected of having an affair with one of her girls. It would not be until 1970, when *The Boys in the Band* was released, that gays would be depicted as real people, not simply—and disturbingly—as child predators, mama's boys, or prostitutes.

Although it left aside the issue of homosexuality in America, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* was notable for its focus on a dysfunctional family ruled with an iron fist by an oppressive patriarch, a theme also explored in the lesser-known 1958 releases *God's Little Acre* and *Hot Spell*. These films, sometimes called dynastic or male-oriented melodramas, pushed against restrictions by depicting

adultery, out-of-wedlock desire, and other taboos of American culture in the 1950s.

See also: Kazan, Elia; Newman, Paul; Taylor, Elizabeth

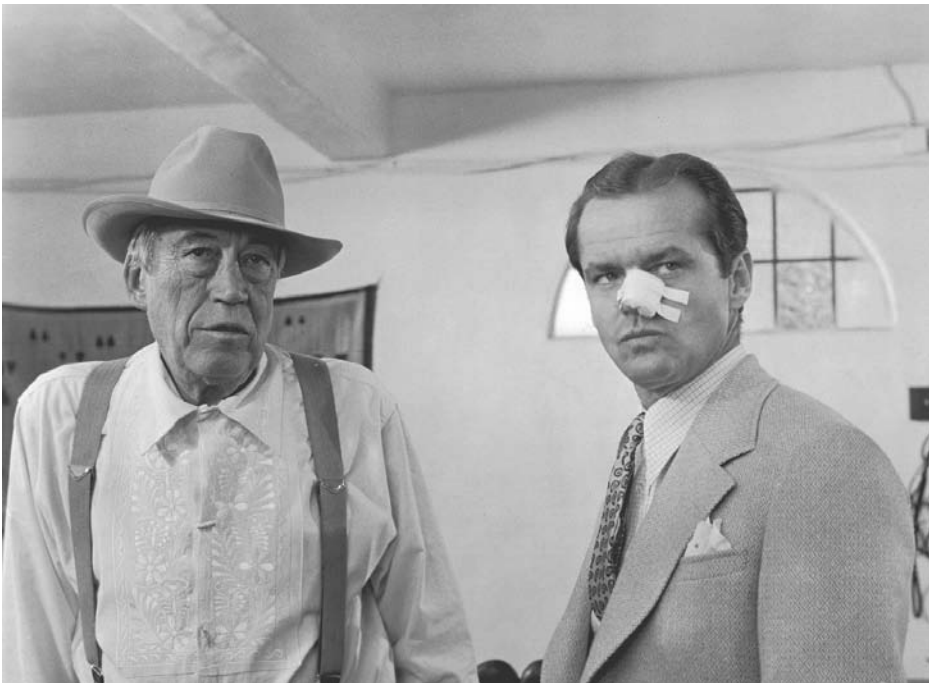
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—Rick Lilla

CHINATOWN. When Roman Polanski's *Chinatown* opened in the summer of 1974, America was at a crossroads. As the long and ultimately disastrous war in Vietnam wound down, an energy crisis shook the national economy, the revelations of the presidential scandal known as Watergate accelerated, and the country's exalted position as a world power seemed surprisingly uncertain. Significantly, although set in mid-1930s Los Angeles, *Chinatown* can properly be described as a cautionary tale about the fragile state of the American psyche during the 1970s. Lushly filmed, with great attention to period architecture and fashion, the picture featured an Oscar-winning screenplay by Robert Towne and a soundtrack that evoked in audiences a sense of both mystery and alarm. Polanski's brilliant direction gave the film an uncanny feel, a sense that, instead of being locked safely away, the unspeakable evils of the world were frighteningly close to hand. Interestingly, the chilling cinematic perspective that Polanski brought to bear in making *Chinatown* may, in large part, have been shaped by his experience of the brutal murder of three family friends and his pregnant wife,



Director and actor John Huston (1906-1987) speaks to actor Jack Nicholson, wearing a bandage over his nose, in a still from the film *Chinatown*, directed by Roman Polanski. (Paramount Pictures/Getty Images)

the actress Sharon Tate, by members of the Manson Family in 1969. Wrapping his own personal tragedy within the disquieting social context of 1970s America, Polanski created a cinematic gem. Heralded by critics and viewers alike, *Chinatown* was ultimately nominated for 11 Academy Awards, and remains, decades after its initial release, a classic of the American cinema.

A tale of parallel stories of political and moral corruption, the narrative structure of *Chinatown* is built on a series of revelatory moments during which the film's main characters confess to crimes committed. The elegantly dressed private investigator J. J. (Jake) Gittes (Jack Nicholson), a former Los Angeles police officer assigned to the city's Chinatown district, has made a good life for himself in Depression-era America, specializing in "matrimonial work," uncovering cheating spouses for suspicious clients. One such client soon presents herself to Gittes. Claiming to be Mrs. Evelyn Mulwray (Diane Ladd), she tells Jake that she suspects her husband of having an affair. That her husband, Hollis Mulwray (Darrell Zwerling), is the Los Angeles Water and Power chief engineer is duly noted by Gittes and his two operatives (Joe Mantell and Bruce Glover). Following Mulwray's movements, Gittes and his assistants appear to hit a dead end as the chief engineer seems interested only in tracking the condition of the city's ever-dwindling water supply. Finally, however, Mulwray is seen with a lovely young woman, and Gittes takes incriminating photographs, which are soon front page news. Only then does the real Evelyn Mulwray (Faye Dunaway) appear in Gittes's office, announcing her intentions to sue the private investigator. When Mulwray dies in what is reported to be a drowning accident, Evelyn hires Gittes herself, as she is convinced that her husband was murdered because of his reluctance to support a suspicious dam project. Water plays a key role in the film, as Gittes proceeds, rather unwittingly, to uncover a plot to divert the city's water supply that has been orchestrated by the rich and powerful Noah Cross (John Huston). Cross, Mulwray's former business partner and also Evelyn's father, is seeking to use his considerable political connections to reroute water to the distant Los Angeles valley in order to cash in on the lucrative housing construction boom.

Loosely based on the career of William Mullholland and the events surrounding the rapid, and some would say corrupt, development of Los Angeles during the early twentieth century, *Chinatown* spoke to America's growing sense of cultural insecurity during the 1970s. The film's labyrinthine narrative ultimately leads its viewers to a stunning conclusion: Noah Cross is not only guilty of figuratively raping the citizens of Los Angeles, he is also guilty of literally raping, and impregnating, his daughter Evelyn when she was a teenager. In one of the film's most powerful and disturbing scenes, Gittes forces Evelyn to admit that Evelyn's sister, Katherine, is also her daughter. In the end, Gittes is incapable of saving either Evelyn or her sister/daughter, much less the city of Los Angeles, from the Noah Crosses of the world. "Forget it Jake," he is told, "it's just Chinatown."

See also: Film Noir; Hard-Boiled Detective Film, The; Nicholson, Jack; Polanski, Roman

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—Kathleen Banks Nutter

CINDERELLA. The idea of a young, friendly woman who is treated like a slave by her cruel stepmother and wicked stepsisters, who, through hard work and a morally superior character, attracts a prince, escapes her miserable life, becomes a princess, and thus elevates all other women in the kingdom, has been attracting audiences for centuries. Based on the 1697 French fairy tale "Cendrillon ou la petite pantoufle de verre" by Charles Perrault, Disney Studios released its feature film *Cinderella* in 1950. It was at the height of the Cold War, when Walt Disney himself found that fairy tales were a good way to calm the American psyche, especially in regard to the perceived threat of Communism.

In this very colorful animation, Cinderella is abused by her stepmother and two stepsisters. Despite her misery, she sings and dances with animals that are her friends, especially two mice called Jaq and Gus. When the king arranges a Royal Ball, her animal friends make a dress for Cinderella that her stepsisters destroy. A fairy godmother appears before weeping Cinderella, and with her magic wand and some "Bibbidi-Bobbidi-Boo," she turns Cinderella into a beautiful young lady. At the ball, Cinderella immediately wins the prince's heart. When the clock strikes midnight, however, she has to escape before her true identity is revealed, as the magic is gone. Rushing away, she loses one of her glass slippers, which the prince uses to search for her. He travels the kingdom, finally arriving at Cinderella's house. Hoping the shoe will fit one of her daughters, Cinderella's stepmother locks her in her room. Resourceful mice steal the stepmother's key, however, unlocking the door and allowing Cinderella to be reunited with her prince. Kneeling before her, the prince gently slides the slipper onto Cinderella's foot—a perfect fit, and he knows he has found his true love.

In urgent need of a hit in order to win back audiences, Disney risked animating the film. Though he also had *Alice in Wonderland* (1951) in production, he concentrated on *Cinderella*, hoping that this picture would recapture the magic of earlier animated films such as *Snow White* (1937). He reimagined whole scenes of *Cinderella*, which allowed him to reduce the cost of animation. Initially shot with actors, Disney used these images to create his first fully animated film since *Bambi* in 1942. With the release of *Cinderella*, Disney became synonymous with family entertainment. Loved by audiences and critics alike, the film received three Academy Award nominations for Best Sound, Original Music Score, and Best Song for "Bibbidi-Bobbidi-Boo." Due to its popularity, the story of *Cinderella* has been adapted for the screen and performed onstage numerous times. In addition, Disney Studios produced two more sequels: *Cinderella II: Dreams Come True* (2002) and *Cinderella III: A Twist in Time* (2007).

While reminiscent of *Snow White*, it may be argued that *Cinderella* presents us with a more culturally complex protagonist. On the one hand, this character was stereotypically representative of what was then understood as the ideal American woman: desperately seeking a way out of her dreadful situation, and assisted by a fairy godmother and a host of helpful animals, she is rescued by a husband/prince who enables her to live “happily ever after.” On the other hand, although beautiful, the narrative at least suggests that what makes Cinderella so very attractive are her tenacity, optimism, and kindness. Indeed, in what may be understood as both a violation of postwar gender standards and an indictment of upper-class privilege, the film depicts Cinderella as rejecting her domesticity and ultimately realizing her dreams despite her lower-class status. Interestingly, after the film was released, Disney officially conducted a series of contests across the United States, looking for local Cinderellas with personality, charm, and good natures—not just physical beauty. Today, then, the story of *Cinderella* provides us with a cautionary tale: although all too often we still teach young women that they should rely on their beauty to attract a princely savior, what we should be teaching them is that their beauty lies within their strength of character and soaring spirits.

See also: Animation; Color; Disney, Walt; *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*

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—Daniela Ribitsch

CITIZEN KANE. Though it is one of the most acclaimed films ever to come out of Hollywood, *Citizen Kane* was as much an object of controversy as of praise, even before its theatrical release in 1941. Film historians have debated endlessly over the authorship of its screenplay as well as over the precise role played by its omnitalented director, Orson Welles, in the conception and execution of this work, but no one today doubts its stature, or the influence it cast upon filmmakers in the decades that followed. If *Citizen Kane* is not, as some have insisted, the “greatest” film ever made, it was certainly Orson Welles’s most important contribution to the art of filmmaking and the work by which he is best remembered today.

The circumstances surrounding the making of *Citizen Kane* were almost as improbable as those of a stereotypic Hollywood melodrama. After a brief but wildly successful career on the stage and in radio, Welles was signed to a multipicture deal by RKO in 1939, in the hope that he could work some of his wunderkind magic on an ailing studio. The terms of his contract were unprecedented for its time: Welles was given a free hand to choose his cast, write his own script, select whichever cinematographer he fancied, and most important of all, he was given the right of final cut. For a young man



Orson Welles wrote, produced, directed, and starred in *Citizen Kane*. In this movie still “Kane” is shown with a billboard of himself in the background. (Underwood & Underwood/Corbis)

(Welles was all of 25) who had no prior experience directing a feature film, this was an extraordinary gesture of faith on the part of RKO, and one that George Schaefer (the studio head) later had reason to regret. However, Welles and his Mercury Theater players had electrified the country a year before with their broadcast of a dramatic version of H. G. Wells’s *War of the Worlds*, and RKO obviously thought that if Welles could startle and delight millions on radio, he was sure to do even more on the silver screen.

Welles's initial plan was to adapt Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, but he scrapped that idea and a second "literary" subject in favor of an original screenplay about a newspaper tycoon whose life could be seen as emblematic of both the transformative and corruptive power of money and fame. The original working title of this film was either *The American* or *John Citizen USA*, from which we can surely deduce that Welles thought of his protagonist, Charles Foster Kane, as a representative American hero/antihero, and one whose life would encapsulate many of the qualities Americans both admired and deplored in their leaders. And while Welles and his co-scriptwriter, Herman Mankiewicz, thought of the fictitious Kane as a composite figure whose traits were drawn from several well-known publishing moguls, it was William Randolph Hearst, whose pillar-of-society public persona and far less appealing private personality, who provided them with the life-model for which they were looking. Neither Welles nor Mankiewicz particularly liked Hearst, nor, as ardent supporters of FDR and the New Deal, did they particularly admire Hearst's conservative political views, so it was hardly surprising that they found in Hearst a combination of personal arrogance and right-wing political sanctimony that practically cried out for ridicule.

Once Hearst got wind of what Welles-Mankiewicz had in mind—namely, a movie that portrayed him as an emotionally unstable demagogue and that hinted broadly at his extramarital relationship with the actress Marion Davies—he was not slow to react. His first impulse was to try and put them out of business. Failing to convince a local draft board to induct Welles into the army, Hearst then sought to convince his friends in Hollywood that it would be worth their while to prevent *Citizen Kane* from being released. Toward that end, Hearst persuaded Louis B. Mayer (studio head of MGM) to offer RKO's Schaefer a substantial bribe either to stop production of the film or, failing that, to destroy all available prints. Fortunately, RKO held firm, and what film scholars have subsequently referred to as the "Battle Over *Citizen Kane*" was won by Welles and company, at least in its first round. However, Hearst was not ready to concede defeat, and after failing to suppress the film, he utilized the resources of his vast newspaper empire to bad-mouth both Welles and his film, with the result that attendance at movie theaters was far less than anyone at RKO had anticipated. Although subsequently nominated for nine Academy Awards, including Best Actor and Best Director, the only award *Citizen Kane* finally received was for Best Original Screenplay. Historians have wondered since then to what extent Hearst's influence over the film community dissuaded members of the Academy from bestowing the honors on the picture it so obviously deserved. Yet, for all the sturm und drang associated with its production and its less-than-spectacular reception, *Citizen Kane* was far from being a flop, and when rereleased after the war, its reputation continued to grow, both in the United States and in Europe. Certainly by the 1960s, film critics had already come to see it as one of the landmark achievements of Hollywood's golden age.

Interestingly, for all its complexities of structure and tone, *Citizen Kane* tells a relatively simple, almost admonitory tale of a man who, in the words of Kane's (Welles) accountant, Mr. Bernstein (Everett Sloane), "lost almost everything he had." The reasons for this loss, and the consequences of Kane's moral failures, demanded a complicated story arc and multiple perspectives on the man and the many contradictions that

defined his personality. Nevertheless, the final judgment on Kane's moral character is rendered unambiguously by Jedediah Leland (Joseph Cotten), Kane's closest friend and ultimately his most bitter enemy: "All he really wanted out of life was love. That's Charlie's story, how he lost it. You see, he just didn't have any to give." Seen from this perspective, Kane's rags-to-riches life story is almost a distraction from the real inner drama that Welles clearly wants to explore, and while it is possible to see Kane as the central fixture in a melodramatic political satire, it is Kane's inability to love, or to respond appropriately to those who love him, that seems to interest Welles more than anything else.

The decision to tell this story over and over again, from differing and even conflicting points of view, was one for which both Welles and Mankiewicz were responsible, at first separately and then in concert as they pieced together the fragments of testimony that would form the substance of their plot. Mankiewicz's term for their method of nonlinear narrative presentation was "prismatic," but in fact the five component narratives (presented as flashbacks) represent more than just different perspectives on a single stationary subject. Each narrator is at once reliable and unreliable—each has his or her own judgmental view of Kane and what he meant to them—and while a mosaiclike image of their subject finally emerges by the end of the film, no single observation about Kane can be taken as objective truth. The film's narrative methodology forces us to carefully observe the tellers of each tale, and to factor in what we know about their personal biases. The truths that emerge from this process are therefore necessarily subjective and relative; but that is all we can hope for in a film that deliberately withholds something like old-fashioned authorial omniscience.

There is a fundamental irony, it should be noted, in Welles's decision to present his modernist satire-cum-biography of *The Great Man* in pseudo-documentary form. From the very beginning we are invited to view the film that is unfolding before us not as a type of public history so much as a kind of intimate exposé, complete with private interviews and equally private memoirs, all assembled in the hopes of discovering the meaning of Kane's deathbed utterance, "Rosebud." That quest, as Welles observed later, was the movie's gimmick, its narrative "hook." Yet, no matter how hard the movie's investigative reporter, Jerry Thompson (William Alland), tries to piece together all of the scattered facts that he has gathered about Kane's life and loves, he still cannot unravel the one mystery he was asked to solve. Of course, it is the viewer who puts the last piece of that puzzle into place, as Kane's childhood sled, with the word *Rosebud* emblazoned on it, is being fed into a furnace: this is a privileged perception, reserved for the audience alone, for like the spectators of classical drama, it is the audience that literally sees things the characters in the play cannot. Not surprisingly, then, the final moments of *Citizen Kane* exhibit none of the "Voice of God" rhetoric of the mock-*March of Time* obituary that is flashed on the screen near the beginning of the film. Instead, Welles's ultimate comment on Kane's life in the concluding frames of the film takes a wordless, symbolic form, as the smoke from Xanadu's furnace curls up into the atmosphere. Kane's life, literally and figuratively, has gone up in smoke, but no one except the camera's eye (and the viewer's) is allowed to perceive it. As Welles intimates in the opening shots of this film, we have been "trespassing" on a private

domain of memory and perception, and have seen things that no biographer is likely to discover.

Significantly, *Citizen Kane's* preeminence in the history of American film is not simply a reflection of either its psychological depth or narrative intricacies. It is, without question, the most technically innovative film of its time, and while earlier filmmakers had experimented with many of the formal devices that Welles and Gregg Toland (*Citizen Kane's* cinematographer) utilized throughout their picture, few did so as consistently or as effectively. The list of such devices is impressively long: overlapping dialogue; unusual camera angles (requiring the construction of ceilings on each set); stylized editing techniques, like wipes and dissolves; montage scenes and images that condense the passage of time; chiaroscuro lighting effects that create pools of light and shadow; flashbacks and flash-forwards; and relatively long takes. Most important of all, however, was Toland's use of deep-focus shots that create a depth of visual field, allowing a larger amount of visual data to enter the picture frame. Where shorter lenses would not achieve this effect, Toland used matte shots to crowd as many figures and as much information as possible onto the screen without sacrificing clarity of representation. Nothing really escapes the camera's eye in *Citizen Kane*, and it is precisely this type of photographic hyperrealism that allowed Welles to dwell on certain objects that take on emotionally charged significance.

Chief among those objects is the glass ball/paperweight that Kane fixates on when his second wife, Susan Alexander Kane (Dorothy Comingore), leaves him, and that drops from his hand at the moment of his death, shattering on the floor as he mutters "Rosebud" for the last time. We initially spot this object in Susan Alexander's room on the occasion of her first encounter with Kane, but its deeper associations become clear once we recognize that Kane has appropriated this ball as a symbol of his lost childhood, as the snow-laden cabin inside the ball reminds him of his mother's boarding-house and the maternal love that was taken from him forever. A similar transformation of object into visual motif occurs when the camera fixes on Susan's jigsaw puzzles, presented in a montage sequence that marks the passage of seasons one into the next. Susan's growing boredom, the stultifying idleness of her life, and her sense of imprisonment at Kane's hands are all objectively conveyed by a roving camera that silently comments on what it sees.

No less memorable are the breakthrough performances of Welles's Mercury Players, particularly those of Cotten as Jedediah Leland, Sloane as Mr. Bernstein, and Agnes Moorehead as Kane's mother. None of these actors had had any feature film experience—though all three had extensive theatrical résumés—and their adaptation to the new medium and their nuanced interpretation of roles—which might easily have degenerated into caricature—is all the more remarkable for their being screen novices. Of course, it is Orson Welles's portrayal of Kane that not only dominates the film but remains longest in the minds of viewers; indeed, without his presence at the center of this drama it could scarcely have had the impact it did. Welles's conspicuously theatrical style of acting—entirely appropriate given the flamboyant character he is portraying—the subtle shading of his often sonorous voice, the changes in gesture and in gait that characterize the aging Kane, all combined to create the illusion of a man whose obvious

egotism and less obvious generosity of spirit are woven together into a painfully delicate existential balance.

See also: Film Editing; Film Noir; Welles, Orson

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—Robert Platzner

CITY LIGHTS. At the conclusion of *City Lights* (United Artists, 1931), the Tramp (Charlie Chaplin) looks wistfully at the Flower Girl (Virginia Cherrill) and asserts, with the hopeful inflection of a question, “You can see now?” She replies, “Yes, I can see now,” and it seems as if the whole of the film could be contained in the ambiguous, equivocal meaning of that exchange. *City Lights* is a richly romantic, tragic, and—at the same time—comic film that speaks powerfully of the difficulty of inhabiting a world from which one is in danger of being ejected. Written, directed, produced, and scored by Chaplin, *City Lights* took almost two years and \$1.5 million to finish, though it made nearly \$2 million over the course of its run; it was a commercial as well as a critical success. Today, it remains one of the most moving and significant films in American history.

City Lights addresses several themes typical of Chaplin’s Tramp films—the flaws endemic in the world of luxury, the struggle of the alienated individual in urban America, the moral superiority of the working poor—and others specifically related to the role of sight in American cinema at the dawn of sound. As the film opens, the title appears in lights over an energetic evening cityscape; in the distance we see a monument to “Peace and Prosperity” that will be unveiled in the next scene. This vignette sets the stage for the story to come, presenting a picture of urban America from the privileged perspective of the wealthy and those who are accepted. The modern, forward-looking city becomes an anonymous site of misery, misrecognition, and pitilessness for the Tramp. As the monument is unveiled, amidst the quacking of the city’s elite, we see the Tramp ironically curled in the arms of Prosperity, where he has slept the night before. Offended, the crowd commands him to remove himself. The Tramp wanders the bustling city street, and to avoid the gaze of a nearby policeman, he climbs through a waiting car to the other side where he meets the Flower Girl. After purchasing a flower, the Tramp discovers that she is blind—for her part, having heard the car door slam shut, believes him to be something he is not. Unable—and perhaps unwilling—to correct her misrecognition, he observes her for a time, under the cover of her blindness. Returning that evening to the shabby flat she shares with her grandmother (Florence Lee), she dreams of her wealthy suitor.

Later, the Tramp encounters an inebriated Millionaire (Harry Myers) attempting suicide by drowning; he is in despair because his wife has left him. The Tramp saves him, though both fall into the river several times during the process. Returning to the Millionaire's luxurious home, they drink heavily under the disapproving eye of the butler (Allan Garcia). After the Millionaire again attempts suicide, the two head out for an evening under the city lights, the Tramp in his new friend's borrowed clothes. At a stylish supper club, the two frenetically dance the night away. In his inebriated state, the Millionaire gives the Tramp his car. He sees the Flower Girl passing, and retrieves a few bills from the Millionaire to buy all of the Flower Girl's merchandise before driving her home. When he returns, the Millionaire has sobered up and forgotten the camaraderie of the night, though the routine is once again played out later that evening. The next morning, the two awake in the Millionaire's bed—one of several homoerotic moments in the film. Despite his mighty struggle to remain in that world, the Tramp is again thrown out.

Visiting the Flower Girl, he learns that she is ill. Saddened, he is determined to earn money to help her and her Grandmother. Under the gaze of Peace and Prosperity, the Tramp, newly employed as a street cleaner, shovels animal droppings into his bin. Later that afternoon, he calls on the Flower Girl, who eagerly awaits his arrival. He arrives laden with gifts of food; he tells her of a Viennese doctor who not only has a cure for blindness, but cures the poor for free. The two share a comfortable visit, until he discovers a letter informing her of impending eviction; now the Tramp is even more in need of funds, but he has lost his job as a street cleaner. A crooked boxer offers him easy money if he will participate in a rigged fight, but, wanted by the law, he flees, leaving the Tramp with a robust new opponent (Hank Mann). He attempts to ingratiate himself, smiling winsomely, and awaits his fight as boxer after boxer returns, badly beaten. In the ring, still wearing his bowler, it looks for a brief moment that the Tramp might indeed succeed, but after the second round, the Tramp is carried out, dazed. Later, he wanders the city streets, searching for a way to help the Flower Girl; a wave of well-dressed people rushes by him, and among them he encounters the Millionaire, who, once again drunk, takes him home.

Unbeknownst to all, two burglars await. The Tramp explains his troubles to the Millionaire, who is touched and gives the Tramp \$1,000. Discovering a gun on the floor, the Tramp worries that his friend will again seek to take his life; as they argue, a burglar creeps up behind them with a sap, eventually knocking the Millionaire unconscious. By the time the police arrive, the burglars have fled, the Millionaire does not remember the Tramp, and the Tramp has a wad of money in his pocket. He escapes in the confusion of the darkened room, and runs to the Flower Girl, giving her the money for her trip to the eye doctor. After leaving, however, he is captured by the law. For close to nine months, the Tramp is incarcerated; meanwhile, the Flower Girl has regained her sight and opened a successful shop. When we next see her, she is serving a handsome, well-dressed man, and for a brief moment, she thinks he must be her suitor; he leaves, however, without recognizing her.

Released from prison, the Tramp seems broken. He aimlessly wanders the streets in torn pants, dirty bowler, and safety-pinned jacket, a far cry from either tidy vagrant or

gentleman in borrowed clothes. On the street, he is mocked and tortured by paper-boys, and when he finds some flowers swept into the gutter from the shop, he stoops to pick one up only to endure the boys tearing at his exposed underwear. After he chases them away, the Tramp recognizes the Flower Girl and gazes with such force she wonders if she has made a conquest; she gives the funny vagrant a coin and flower to replace the one from the gutter that he had crushed in his astonishment. As they touch, she recognizes him; she acknowledges that she can see, but in her eyes there is sadness, for he is not the man she thought he was. The camera fades out on the Tramp's shy, hopeful smile.

Among Chaplin's numerous financial and personal crises during the production of *City Lights*, the advent of sound threatened to make his most well-known character—and the moral-aesthetic sensibility he represents—a relic of a bygone era. As part owner of United Artists, however, Chaplin was able to enjoy the privilege of indulging his spontaneous production habits and the freedom to reject dialogue. In the late 1920s, cinema was quickly passing the Rubicon marked by synchronized sound-on-film; *City Lights*, not a true silent film but a “silent talkie,” would attempt to negotiate this new technological terrain by employing a synchronized soundtrack but no dialogue. Chaplin's score is notable in its use of sound effects that not only complement the film's physical comedy but also suggest a kind of commentary on the empty noise of talking pictures—in the opening sequence, for instance, the pompous city luminaries “speak” through kazoos. Despite this satirical commentary, there is also a nostalgic quality about the film especially resonant for its Depression-era audiences. *City Lights* seems aware of itself as an anachronism, much like the Tramp himself, who belongs to none of the worlds he so desperately wants to inhabit. The Flower Girl's unresolved choice at the conclusion of the film is thus not hers alone.

See also: Chaplin, Charlie; Silent Era, The

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—Tonya Howe

CLEOPATRA. Released in 1963, *Cleopatra* has sometimes been referred to as the biggest movie failure in film history. Twentieth Century-Fox was in financial difficulties, and *Cleopatra* was originally conceived as a low-cost production. With easily affordable second-tier actors such as Peter Finch, Stephen Boyd, and Joan Collins,

the film's producers reasoned that they could easily stay within the limits of their \$2 million budget. Production costs began to balloon almost immediately, however, when Fox agreed to Elizabeth Taylor's salary demand of \$1 million. Still, filming began on an optimistic note at the Pinewood Studios in London under the direction of Rouben Mamoulian; but 16 months and \$7 million later, after Elizabeth Taylor had almost died of pneumonia and most of the sets were destroyed by rain, the production was shut down. A year passed before it was resumed, now with Joseph Mankiewicz, who had directed Taylor in the highly successful *Suddenly Last Summer*, in charge. The surviving ten minutes of usable film from the London shoot was discarded, Rex Harrison and Richard Burton replaced Peter Finch and Stephen Boyd as Caesar and Mark Antony, and filming was moved to Rome and various locations in Spain.

Things began to break down again, though, as Mankiewicz began rewriting the script and filming scenes in the order that they were written, which created costly time delays. During these delays a romance developed between Taylor and Burton. The affair became a bigger story than the film itself, since both Taylor and Burton were married at the time. Taylor was still in the tabloids for, some believed, having stolen Eddie Fisher away from his first wife Debbie Reynolds, soon after her own husband, Michael Todd, was killed. This new scandal brought condemnation from the Pope and even reached the floor of Congress, where attempts were made to revoke Taylor's passport.

Mankiewicz wanted to make *Cleopatra* an historical epic with the emphasis on "historical." He hired thousands of extras and pushed his set and costume designers to make everything he was going to shoot as historically accurate as possible. Conceiving the film as an extended, six-hour production, Mankiewicz suggested that the picture would be divided into two three-hour segments that would be released separately. Darryl Zanuck, who took control of Fox during the final phase of production, when costs were again spiraling out of control, opposed the two-part release and forced Mankiewicz to cut first two, and then three hours from the film. While *Cleopatra* still managed to be nominated for nine Oscars, including Best Picture, and did eventually break even at the box office, critical opinion was mostly negative. Mankiewicz believed that the final product was a poor substitute for the grand film spectacle that he had imagined, and the actors grumbled that their best scenes had been left on the cutting-room floor. Taylor was so upset she refused to attend the opening.

Because it followed other successful historical epics, such as *The Ten Commandments* (1956), *Ben Hur* (1959), *Spartacus* (1960), and *El Cid* (1961), there was good reason to believe that *Cleopatra*, especially with its stellar cast, would be successful. Epics, after all, were popular enough to compete with television for audiences; and it was thought that another big-budget extravaganza would bring people back to theaters. Epics, it was argued by many in Hollywood, were good investments because they shared several common features: longer running times, that allowed for advance ticket sales and intermissions; multiple storylines; heroes who experience setbacks but whose deaths or suffering have redemptive qualities; star-studded ensemble casts; and unified action, where the various storylines and characters serve one overarching theme. Unfortunately, because historically Cleopatra was less heroic than seductively disruptive, there was little about her, or her story, that seemed redemptive. Even the forbidden

relationship between Taylor and Burton, which was eerily close to that of Cleopatra and the men she brought down and which was now being played out on the screen, could not save the picture; indeed, because the stars were less than discreet about their affair, their relationship may have angered audiences, keeping them away from theaters. In the end, the dismal failure of *Cleopatra* effectively brought a close to the studio-financed, big-budget epic. With the development of computer-generated imagery, however, making filmic spectacle possible without the expense of “casts of thousands,” the historical epic returned in 2000 with the highly successful *Gladiator*.

See also: Taylor, Elizabeth

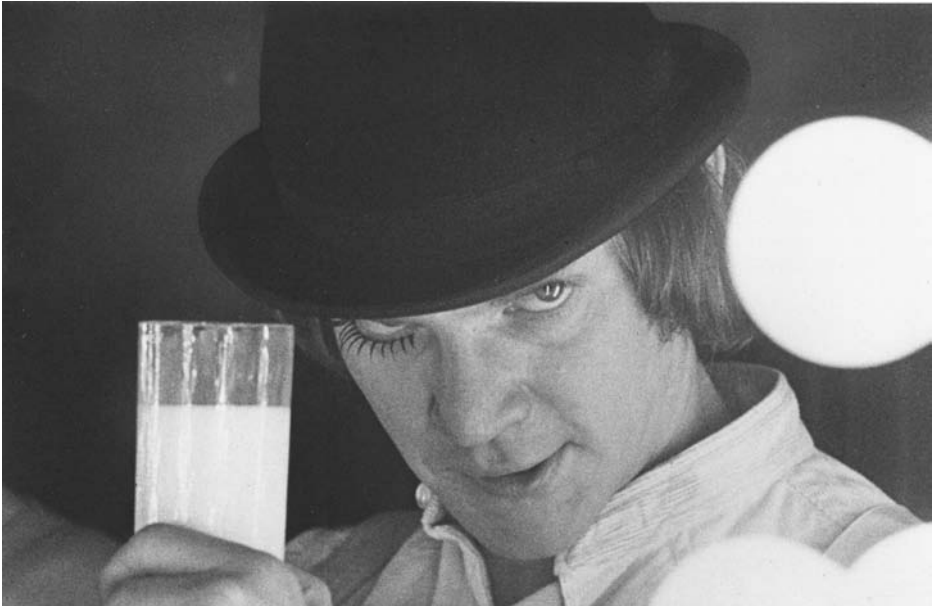
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—Rick Lilla

CLOCKWORK ORANGE, A. One of the most controversial films in the history of American cinema, *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) is, perhaps, director Stanley Kubrick’s darkest assessment of the human condition, even though it stands within a body of work that is replete with similar bleak observations. One of the few American cinematic offerings initially to receive an X-rating and yet still be considered for Best Picture at the Academy Awards (the other was *Midnight Cowboy*), Kubrick made slight changes to the film to earn it an “R” rating, thus allowing it to be seen by larger audiences and to become financially successful. And successful it was, earning more than 10 times its estimated budget in its American release alone. Critics were sharply divided over the film, which may be reflected in the fact that although *A Clockwork Orange* was nominated for a plethora of mainstream awards (four Oscars, seven BAFTA Awards, and three Golden Globes), it failed to win any of them. Probably the least likely of Kubrick’s films to be shown on cable television, and banned with Kubrick’s consent from presentation in England for nearly 30 years, the film has remained a cult classic, earning over 2 million pounds in a 2000 English rerelease after the death of the director in 1999.

A Clockwork Orange follows the story of Alex (Malcolm McDowell), a young Beethoven-loving malcontent who terrorizes the inhabitants of a futuristic, style-conscious, and dystopian England with his fellow “Droogs.” His story is divided into three interconnected narrative segments. In the first, we see Alex and his friends raping, fighting, and pillaging for the sheer thrill of it. In the next, Alex is imprisoned and medically reconditioned to reject violence (and, accidentally, Beethoven) through a new behavioral technique that eliminates his free will. In the final section, a now reformed (and helpless) Alex retraces his steps from the first section of the film, and is preyed upon by his former victims in a nightmarish sequence that eventually results



Malcolm McDowell in a scene from Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange*, which shocked audiences when it was released in 1971. (Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images)

in an attempted suicide. It is this act that breaks his conditioning, and in the final sequence of the film, the audience is treated to a gloriously depraved look inside Alex's mind, with the promise of more violence and sex to come. Once again free to choose, Alex returns to his former life as a violent street thug.

Like his prior film, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *A Clockwork Orange* is suffused with rich, original, complex, and shocking images, all expertly filmed by cinematographer John Alcott. While the violence and sexuality of the movie have received a great deal of attention, the film's most enduring images may be those focused on Alex's eyes: his audience-directed glare in the film's opening shot; his gleeful, masked expression after he croons "Singin' in the Rain" during a rape sequence; and the terror-stricken stare when his eyes are forced open during the administration of the unsettling behavioral process, called the Ludovico technique in the film. In a perverse way, Kubrick compels us to view the world, literally and figuratively, through Alex's eyes. As Thomas Allen Nelson suggests, it is through the use of this filmic device that Kubrick attempts to turn his audience members into voyeurs who cannot tell the difference between their own fantasies and the ones depicted on the screen.

The stylistic imaginings of Alex's futuristic violent youth culture were certainly meant to be terrifying; but for Kubrick, it seems, they were also meant to be comprehensible as a real, and vital, part of our world. It may be argued that in leading his audiences to sympathize with Alex, even as they recoil in horror from his disturbing behavior, Kubrick was seeking to expose humanity's deep fascination with deviant

forms of sex and violence, a fascination that continually threatens to burst forth from within the boundaries imposed by civilized societies striving to regulate the appetites and consequences that accompany these base activities. Given that Alex's life is really only threatened when he becomes suicidal after losing his ability to choose his own path, what Kubrick may have been saying with *A Clockwork Orange* was that humans are nothing more than pathetic wind-up toys if they do not have choices, even if those choices sometimes unleash the most disquieting elements of our existence.

See also: Kubrick, Stanley

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—James M. Brandon

CLUELESS. *Clueless*, a 1995 film directed by Amy Heckerling, is a modern-day adaptation of Jane Austen's *Emma*. This update of the Austen novel features Alicia Silverstone as Cher Horowitz (the contemporary Emma Woodhouse), a matchmaker who speed dials her love matches from her cell phone in a Beverly Hills mall. Though Cher does not involve herself in matchmaking as a result of a deal or a bet, she does feel it is *her* responsibility (as the most popular girl in her Beverly Hills high school) to make over an out-of-place transfer named Tai (Brittany Murphy) and find her a suitable boyfriend. Little does Cher realize that love has been what she herself has been looking for all along.

The film opens at an outdoor pool party. Hordes of impossibly beautiful and wealthy teenagers are splashing one another as Cher narrates the scene, taking the audience on a brief introductory journey through her life. Cher, a late twentieth-century teenage girl, picks out her daily outfits from a computer-programmed closet, refuses to date high school boys, and has an older, ex-stepbrother named Josh (Paul Rudd), who accuses her of having only one direction in life: "toward the mall."

Anxious to prove there is more to her than a superficial exterior, Cher embarks on a crusade of selflessness. She begins by playing matchmaker to two of her teachers, the nerdy Mr. Hall (Wallace Shawn) and lonely Miss Geist (Twink Caplan). Her next project is to make over Tai, a "tragically unhip" new arrival at their high school. After a trip to the mall, Cher attempts to set up Tai with Elton (Jeremy Sisto), a popular, good-looking boy in school, although Tai has her eye on a skateboarding stoner, Travis (Breckin Meyer). Cher discovers Elton actually prefers her and is left to comfort the distraught Tai, who feels betrayed by her mentor. That weekend, Cher brings Tai to a party, and she ends up falling for Josh. Cher's experiment soon turns sour when Tai's popularity surpasses her own, as Tai morphs into a self-obsessed monster who has no idea how "clueless" her mentor really is. Crushed by Tai's rejection (and upset by her

inability to pass her driver's test), Cher goes on a soul-searching expedition (which includes a shopping spree at the mall). Vowing to make a stronger effort at a more productive life, Cher volunteers for a disaster-relief drive and makes amends with Tai, encouraging her to go out with Travis. She also begins to spend more time with Josh, coming to understand that what she took to be the most unappealing things about him—his intellect, his commitment to hard work, his rejection of Cher's superficial lifestyle—are the very things she now finds most attractive about him.

Clueless was the first in a series of modern filmic remakes of classic novels that were aimed at teenage audiences. Filmmakers had often turned to works by authors such as Shakespeare, Dickens, and Austen, but most of the pictures they produced were "straight" adaptations of literature to the screen. In adapting classic literary works as teen films, however, studios were attempting to broaden the appeal of these narratives and market them to younger audiences (Davis, 2006). Other teen films that followed the trend set by *Clueless* include *10 Things I Hate about You* (a 1999 remake of *Taming of the Shrew*), *Cruel Intentions* (a 1999 remake of *Dangerous Liaisons*), and *O* (a 2001 remake of *Othello*).

Although widely popular with audiences, *Clueless* split critics. Many praised the film, seeing it as an indictment of the "cult of popularity" that acted to marginalize teens without the financial or emotional resources to become part of the affluent "in-crowd." Others saw *Clueless* as nothing more than a "makeover film," one that brought consumption to the forefront of teenage consciousness, masking superficiality and opulence with satire and references to popular culture, and demonstrating that anyone can be popular through shopping and by prescribing to the right beauty conventions. Disturbingly, they argued, films such as *Clueless*, and later, *She's All That* (1999) and *Never Been Kissed* (1999), made the mall into a kind of utopian sacred space wherein social outcasts could be normalized and carried from the "lowest high school social rung to the top" of the social ladder (Quart, 2003).

See also: Coming-of-Age Film, The; Heckerling, Amy

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—Jennie Woodard

CONVERSATION, THE. *The Conversation* is a film written and directed by Francis Ford Coppola. Released between the first two installments of his *Godfather* trilogy, it won the Palme d'Or at the 1974 Cannes Film Festival and was nominated for three Academy Awards, including Best Picture. Surprisingly, perhaps because of its narrative opacity, it was not a box-office success, although it has since grown in influence. Coppola has referred to it as his favorite of the films he has made.

The movie follows Harry Caul (Gene Hackman), a private surveillance expert hired by the Director (Robert Duvall) to record the conversation between his wife, Ann (Cindy Williams) and her lover, Mark (Frederic Forrest). Using a number of different listening devices, he is able to piece together much of their exchange. A comment by Mark, “he’d *kill* us if he got the chance,” troubles Caul, as he believes that the lives of Ann and Mark are in danger. Although he meets the Director’s assistant, Martin (Harrison Ford), Harry refuses to hand over the tapes he has recorded.

Ironically, Harry’s skill at exposing the most intimate secrets of those on whom he spies is the very thing that makes his private life so disturbingly sterile. Terrified to open up to anyone else, including his assistant Stan (John Cazale) and his girlfriend Amy (Terri Garr), he turns to the only person with whom he feels somewhat safe, his priest. In a painful act of contrition, Harry confesses that in the past his work led to the deaths of two people. Now, he believes, the same thing might happen if he reveals what was said during the conversation between Ann and Mark.

Although Harry hides the tapes, they are stolen by the Director’s operatives. When summoned to the office of the Director so that he can be paid for his work, Caul finds his client in a state of rage over what he has heard on the tapes. Believing that the Director is planning to kill his wife and her lover at a meeting in a hotel that had been mentioned during the conversation between Ann and Mark, Harry decides to listen in. He bugs the meeting room and overhears a confrontation between the couple and the Director. Overwhelmed by what he is hearing, Harry peeks through a window into the meeting room and is startled to see the results of a bloody struggle. Horrified and impotent, Caul retreats into his own room. After regaining his composure, he sneaks into the adjoining room to find that it has no mark of a struggle. When he flushes the toilet, however, blood flows out and Harry is certain that he has been complicit in at least one more murder.

Later, Caul is shocked to find that Ann is alive and well, and that it is the Director who is dead. Realizing that he has been a pawn in a plot to murder the Director, it dawns on Harry that what Mark had said to Ann was really, “He’d kill *us* if he got the chance.” The fateful statement, it is now clear, had been a justification for murder. Returning home, he receives a call instructing him not to discuss the murder with anyone and warning him that he is under surveillance. Terrified, Harry dismantles his apartment piece by piece, but cannot find a bug.

Coppola points to Michelangelo Antonioni’s *Blow Up* (1966) as the inspiration for *The Conversation*. Like Antonioni’s film, *The Conversation* explored the technological blurring of lines between the private and public spheres and the real-world consequences, both psychological and political, to which such technological acts of elision can give rise. Interestingly, although conceived before the Watergate scandal rocked America, *The Conversation* was released just months before President Nixon was forced to resign in the summer of 1974, after it was revealed that he had recorded plans for a cover-up of the break-in at Democratic Headquarters. The parallel between the fate of *The Conversation*’s protagonist—Harry Caul is exposed by the very technology that he believed would keep him safe—and that of President Nixon was one of the things that led to the film’s cult status.

See also: Coppola, Francis Ford; Politics and Film

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—Alan C. Abbott

COOL HAND LUKE. *Cool Hand Luke* is a 1967 Stuart Rosenberg film depicting one man's encounter with discipline and punishment within the confines of a 1940s chain gang. The tenor of *Cool Hand Luke* and its release during the late 1960s reflects the spirit of an era in the midst of civil transformation.

Paul Newman in his role as "Lukas 'Luke' Jackson," delivers a performance characterized by non-conformity and a skepticism about the infallibility of institutions of control. Serving a two-year sentence in a correctional facility, Luke finds himself entangled in a web of trivial rules and regulations. His unwillingness to operate within these formal boundaries, his clever wit, and his calm demeanor earn him the name "Cool Hand Luke."

Soon prison inmates befriend Luke for his carefree attitude, appetite for adventure and constant defiance. These antiheroic qualities can be found in scenes where Luke's resistance reverses the legitimacy and efficacy of institutionalized masculinity, discipline, and punishment; in effect revealing the social ironies of a correctional system designed to diminish one's sense of self.

In one example of this resistance, Luke finds himself embroiled in a dispute with another inmate named "Dragline," played by George Kennedy. As prison rules and hypermasculinity take hold, Dragline and Luke begin to settle their dispute through a fight. With bets riding and the fervor of male competitiveness growing, Dragline delivers a vicious beating to Luke. Disadvantaged in both size and strength, Luke's stubborn posturing and reluctance to give up somehow drains Dragline of his determination.

As the fight comes to an end, the seriousness of the violence becomes more apparent, and the excitement of onlookers transforms into disgust. In the end, the crowd of observers disperses and Dragline walks away leaving Luke badly beaten. Despite his obvious loss, Luke's willingness to continue his fight, even though he knows he has no chance of winning, impresses all who witness the performance. This critical scene emphasizes the brutality of the violence and draws out the absurdities of making such behavior an acceptable negotiating mechanism for prisoners.

Luke's unflappable personality is also accompanied by an amusing tact for dealing with boredom; often resulting in the entertainment and inspiration of his fellow inmates. In one illustrative scene, Luke wins a wager that he can eat 50 eggs in one



Paul Newman, playing a banjo, and George Kennedy talk in a still from the 1967 film *Cool Hand Luke*, directed by Stuart Rosenberg. Newman was nominated for a Best Actor Oscar while Kennedy won a Best Supporting Actor Oscar for their roles in the film. (Warner Bros./Getty Images)

hour. Although this scene appears to be a farcical episode of senselessness, the event suggests a rethinking of the impossible, while encouraging the unthinkable.

Throughout the movie a growing tension emerges between definitions of incarceration and freedom. In one of the most popular scenes, the “Captain” of the facility, played by Strother Martin, castigates Luke for escaping; uttering the now-famous phrase “What we’ve got here is [a] failure to communicate.” Herein a paradox exists where such a communication breakdown could only be possible under the circumstances of an imbalanced distribution of power.

Although Luke makes three attempts to escape, a subtext of his venturesome life within the prison suggests that he is only physically incarcerated, while his mind and soul remain virtually free. During one of Luke’s escape attempts, he mails the inmates a picture of himself nuzzled between two attractive women with a postscript that reads, “Dear Boys, Playing it Cool, Luke.” The picture becomes an article of veneration for the inmates, one that appears to provide a sense of optimism for a life beyond the prison’s fences. Yet, upon being apprehended and returned to the facility, Luke concedes that the photograph was a fake—paid for and doctored merely to entertain. In a telling scene that follows, the inmates struggle to accept Luke’s admission, somehow holding onto the notion that such a system of control and incarceration is surmountable. Yet,

in this instance, and indeed at the end of the film when Luke's final escape ends in his death, such a notion of romantic invincibility proves illusory. Given the release of this film during the civil unrest of late 1960s, such a theme seems to have resonated with audiences engaged in a similar form of futile resistance, irrespective of an unprecedented show of opposition toward conventional values.

See also: Newman, Paul; Politics and Film

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—Salvador Murguía

CRASH (1996). One can scarcely imagine a more sympathetic filmmaker to adapt the late J. G. Ballard's novel *Crash* than David Cronenberg (the novel was released in 1973, the film in 1996). One of the few truly radical sensibilities operating in mainstream cinema, Cronenberg is equally preoccupied, as critic Gavin Smith notes, with "the communion of characters with technology, disease, narcotics, telepathy, and Otherness" (1997). One has only to recall the loners and malformed techno-creatures that populate other Cronenberg films—*Videodrome*, *The Fly*, and *Naked Lunch*, for example—to understand Smith's point.

Ballard's brilliant, controversial novel probes contemporary society's obsessions with sex, death, and the automobile. Flesh and metal, blood and gasoline, copulation and collision run like bright threads through the narrative—frequently intertwined, sometimes fused—forecasting a transcendent, disastrous apocalyptic moment. According to Ballard, the story grew out of a concatenation of circumstances, including a bad acid trip, a personal preoccupation with earth-shattering cataclysm (foregrounded in his 1960s science fiction novels), and a museum exhibit he organized himself in 1970, which displayed three car wrecks and was introduced to the public by a topless female guide. The latter event, he says, was his "green light" to write *Crash*. Public response was one of immediate shock and indignation. "This author is beyond psychiatric help," moaned one commentator.

In his novel, Ballard literally wrote himself into the narrative as the central character—the author gave his protagonist the name James Ballard and made him a filmmaker at London's Shepperton Studios, Shepperton being the name of the suburb in which the real-life Ballard lived. The story unfolds from the point where Ballard survives a nearly fatal car crash and quickens to the erotic charge of a culture given over to traffic jams and automobile accidents, as well as to a subculture of sex-and-crash freaks huddled at society's margins. Ballard indulges in every aspect of automobile sex with a host of bizarre friends and acquaintances: Robert Vaughan, a former actor who now spends his time photographing accidents and plotting out imaginary collisions for himself

and others; Catherine, his nymphomaniacal wife; Dr. Remington, a survivor of Ballard's crash; Gabrielle, an accident survivor whose body has been patched and shackled with metal braces; and Seagrave, a stunt driver who revels in his work. "The motor car," writes Ballard, "was the sexual act's greatest and only true locus."

What follows is not so much the evolutionary unfolding of a plot as the depiction of a series of violent encounters, described in highly graphic—some would say pornographic—detail. Ballard and his companions seem to have been stunned by the glare of approaching headlights and damaged by the concussive force of metal meeting bone. Their bodies, like their automobiles, are broken and twisted into bizarre shapes that elicit experiments in new forms of erotic activity. "[Their] wounds," says Ballard, "were the keys to a new sexuality born from a perverse technology." It is an arc of steadily intensifying activity that leads to Vaughan's unsettling obsession with stage-managing a crash that will kill actress Elizabeth Taylor. In the end, it is Vaughan, not the actress, who lies dying in the crumpled metal. Ballard is left to mourn Vaughan, ultimately coming to the realization that he must begin designing the elements of his own car crash, which, as it turns out, will be but a small part in a global apotheosis of carnage: "In his mind Vaughan saw the whole world dying in a simultaneous automobile disaster, millions of vehicles hurled together in a terminal congress of spurting loins and engine coolant."

Cronenberg's faithful film adaptation of the Ballard novel received a mixture of cheers and boos—it won the Special Jury Prize at Cannes in 1996, but received a chilly reception in America from distributor Ted Turner. Except for a minor change in location (from London to Toronto) and the excision of the Elizabeth Taylor motif, it retains intact the novel's major elements. James Ballard (James Spader) is a filmmaker who encounters Helen Remington (Holly Hunter), the widow of a man killed in a crash. She introduces Ballard to a strange, dark man named Vaughan (Elias Koteas), the guru of car crashes. Slaughter, it seems, feeds Vaughan's hunger, extends his vision, and arouses in him a sense of both pain and fulfillment. He hangs around hospitals taking pictures of accident victims. He and his friends sit at home watching videocassettes of crash-test dummies being slammed about. They stage reenactments of famous auto disasters (a plot detail only hinted at in the novel). In front of a bleacher full of onlookers, Vaughan reprises the James Dean collision—and almost kills himself in the process. (He will, in fact, eventually kill himself in an attempt to restage the Jayne Mansfield accident, in which the star was purportedly decapitated.)

Meanwhile, our hero, James, has been sampling, on his own, all kinds of automobile sex. His strange encounters are more like emotional and psychological collisions, random and anonymous. James, finally, is left with no other desire than to wander the freeways looking for disaster and sex. In a departure from the novel, the climactic scene has him impulsively running Catherine's (Deborah Ungar) car off the road. He scrambles down the embankment and embraces her broken and bleeding body. Is he glad she's still alive; or is he disappointed she did not die? "Maybe the next one, darling, maybe the next one," he says enigmatically. The camera lifts up and away—leaving the scene of an accident, as it were—in a panoramic act of voyeurism, allowing us to witness James and Catherine having sex before the image fades to black.

Aside from this shocking ending, which is not an alteration so much as a visualization of the prophecy in the novel's penultimate paragraph, the film's most sensational moments stem directly from the book—the homosexual encounter between Ballard and Vaughan, the bizarre sex scene between Ballard and the metal-braced Gabrielle (Rosanna Arquette), and the lyrically dazzling carwash sequence that intercuts back-seat lovemaking with the orgasmic frenzy of the squirting sudsy water and flailing cloth pads.

Crash has the panoply of imagery and props typical of a Cronenberg film—the matting of flesh and metal, the dehumanization of the sex act, the invasive presence of broadcast media, etc. The sex scenes are frequent (there are three encounters within the first minute of screen time), blunt, and graphic. It earned its NC-17 rating. Significantly, however, the film version of *Crash*, like Ballard's novel, chronicles all this in a cold, remote fashion, regarding the floundering and cruelties of the characters with a dispassionate gaze—as if they were mere reflections spreading across the sleek surface of polished metal. Cronenberg eschews stylistic hype, the expected hard-rock soundtrack, the token frenzied handheld camera, and the predictable frenetic cutting. Instead, the characters and the story seem to *drift*, a gasoline-inhaling machine moving at full throttle but with the clutch all the way in. As Gavin Smith writes, “Cronenberg’s film exemplifies cool, hieratic austerity. His setups and cutting have never been more inhumanely deliberate and exact. . . . In its subdued, subtractive minimalism and almost oppressive formal control, *Crash* toys with the possibilities of enervation and entropy” (Smith, 1997). Ballard and Cronenberg aspired to force us into a disturbing imaginative space, it seems, one in which the flame of fantasy burns with an intensely cold dystopic heat.

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—John C. Tibbetts

CRASH (2004). Paul Haggis’s *Crash* (2004) is about racial and social tensions in Los Angeles, and is a harsh critique of the hypocrisy of multicultural thought, political correctness, and the abuse of stereotypes. The story was inspired by a real-life incident in which Haggis’s car was carjacked outside a video store in 1991. The film won three Academy Awards: Best Picture, Best Original Screenplay, and Best Editing.

“In L.A., nobody touches you. We’re always behind this metal and glass. I think we miss that touch so much, that we crash into each other, just so we can feel something.” So says Detective Graham Waters (Don Cheadle) to his colleague and partner, Ria (Jennifer Esposito), as they head to a crime scene at the beginning of the film—Waters

will come to find out that the victim at the scene is actually his brother. Spinning off from this opening, *Crash* proceeds in flashback, as a series of seemingly unrelated yet ultimately intersecting storylines, which are organized around the jarring, fleeting relationships that are established among members of different racial groups. The white, upper-middle-class Cabots—D.A. Rick (Brendan Fraser) and his wife Jean (Sandra Bullock)—“crash” into two black thieves, Anthony (Chris “Ludacris” Bridges) and Peter (Larenz Tate), when the young men draw guns and carjack their vehicle. Shaken, Jean must now deal with the aftermath of the unsettling event by having the locks changed at their house. Disturbed by the appearance of a Puerto Rican locksmith, Daniel (Michael Peña), who is performing the service, Jean demands of her husband, within earshot of Daniel, that he have the locks changed again in the morning—this time, one assumes, by someone who, as Jean sees it, is not a gang member. A racist policeman, John Ryan (Matt Dillon), humiliates a middle-class black couple, the Thayers, Cameron (Terrence Howard) and Christine (Thandie Newton), when, after pulling them over, he sexually molests Christine while supposedly frisking her—as her outraged but helpless husband is forced to watch. Later, John will be have the cultural tables turned on him when he must try to convince a black social worker, Shaniqua Johnson (Loretta Devine), that his father needs government-funded assistance; and, in a cruel irony—for both people, it seems—he actually saves Christine’s life after she is in a car accident. Finally, Officer Ryan’s politically correct partner, Tom Hansen (Ryan Phillippe), who prevents Cameron from being shot by other cops, ends up shooting Peter—whom he thinks is reaching for a gun. Peter, it turns out, is the brother of Detective Waters. There is more woven among these complex storylines—a disturbing narrative sequence in which an Iranian shopkeeper, Farhab (Shaun Toub), who thinks that Daniel has robbed him after Daniel is called out to look at Farhab’s locks, almost kills Daniel’s young daughter—but Haggis’s powerful point about racial hatred can be lifted from any of the individual vignettes.

Although audience and critical responses to the film were exceptionally good, especially given that it focuses on subject matter that makes many viewers uncomfortable, some found certain aspects of *Crash* problematic. Its portrayals of certain ethnic groups, for instance, especially Asians and Asian Americans, were sometimes degrading; and, as film critic Paul Gromley pointed out, the portrayal of the character Farhab lapses into caricature, suggesting that the Iranian shopkeeper is driven by some primitive belief in blood revenge, and thus appears to be nothing more than a “deranged, paranoid individual.” Because of this, argues Gromley, the film’s message risks being subverted, as the prejudice it criticizes is sometimes cinematically directed toward the members of particular ethnic groups (Gromley, 2007).

According to film critic Roger Ebert, however, because the characters in *Crash* “say exactly what they are thinking, without the filters of political correctness,” the film, even with its flaws, is ultimately about “progress,” representing, as it were, a cultural awareness of Otherness.

See also: African Americans in Film; Ethnic and Immigrant Culture Cinema

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—Zoltán Dragon

CRYING GAME, THE. Neil Jordan's controversial 1992 film *The Crying Game* explores issues surrounding the creation of national, gender, racial, and sexual identities. Although *The Crying Game* received six Academy Award nominations, it won only one, for Jordan's screenplay.

The film begins at a fair where IRA terrorists kidnap a British soldier in order to use him to ransom IRA prisoners. Fergus (Stephen Rea), a reluctant IRA member, is entrusted with keeping an eye on the prisoner, Jody (Forest Whitaker). Hidden away in a barn at a countryside cottage, prisoner and guard begin to establish a bond, one that becomes so intimate that Jody asks Fergus to make sure his girlfriend, Dil (Jaye Davidson), is safe in case he should die. Fergus is ultimately ordered to execute Jody, although he is unable to carry out the task. Head covered by a sack and hands tied behind his back, Jody desperately tries to escape; eventually stumbling onto a road, he is run down and killed by a British military vehicle. Disturbed by what he has seen, and by his role in it, Fergus flees to London, recreating himself as a Scottish construction worker. Seeking to fulfill his promise to Jody, Fergus finally contacts Dil. In an interesting parallel to the evolving relationship that was established between Fergus and Jody, Fergus and Dil now establish their own increasingly intimate relationship.



Scene from the 1992 film *The Crying Game*, directed by Neil Jordan. (Photofest)

In one of the most unsettling, and redemptive, scenes in modern cinema, an excited Fergus slowly undresses Dil, only to discover that “she” is a man. Shocked, Fergus wants nothing more to do with Dil; and yet he cannot tear himself away from her—their bond has already grown too strong. When he is imprisoned after failing to carry out an IRA plan, Dil faithfully visits him in jail, now as his girlfriend.

Jordan does a masterful job drawing his audiences in: by the time Dil’s identity is disclosed to us—moviegoers and critics were urged not to “reveal the secret” to those who had not yet seen the movie—we, like Fergus, have already come to care about Dil, making it all but impossible for us to dismiss her as some infectious Other. Interestingly, Jordan created musical bookends for his narrative: in the opening sequence we hear Percy Sledge’s “When a Man Loves a Woman”; and during the final scene, we hear Lyle Lovett’s rendition of “Stand by Your Man.” Respectively blues and country ballads about the torturous dynamics of heterosexual relationships, their use in *The Crying Game* seems to represent Jordan’s attempt to trope normative notions of love and responsibility. The director goes further by weaving through the narrative three distinct interpretations of the song “The Crying Game.” Offered three times, by three different artists, using three very different musical styles, the song has a way of segmenting the plotline, emphasizing its visual and narrative dimensions and guiding the interpretation of particular scenes and of the film itself.

A complex and provocative picture, *The Crying Game* was controversial on many levels. One of the most notorious—and politically relevant—moments in the film was the seduction scene set at the carnival. Preparing the way for Jody’s kidnapping, Jude (Miranda Richardson) assists him at the bathrooms (an act that is later repeated between Jody and Fergus), and afterwards offers herself to the soldier. Critics were angered by what they saw as a problematic plot point: a British paratrooper is played by an African American actor, who is seduced by a white, female Irish Republican Army activist, played by a British actress. Scholar Patrick McGee interprets this scene within a nationalist context, suggesting that Jude’s act of sexual surrender may be understood as the symbolical mother of the Irish nation (Kathleen Ni Houlihan—a maternal symbol of Ireland and Irish nationalism) offering herself up for violent invasion (McGee, 1997). Although seemingly an interpretive stretch, it must be remembered that the film’s release coincided with brutal IRA terrorist attacks on London. Director Jordan even claimed that the original box-office failure of his film could be attributed to the contentious political issues upon which it touched. Interestingly, after the film was released in the United States—becoming a huge hit—it was successfully rereleased in Great Britain.

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—Zoltán Dragon

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DANCES WITH WOLVES. Kevin Costner's *Dances with Wolves* (1990) reimagines the West as a place where Indians, and not whites, rule the plains, at least for a time. Offering audiences a revisionist perspective on the West, and on the western itself, the film depicts a world in which at least some whites have a genuine interest in learning about the lives and customs of Native Americans.

In the early 1980s, Michael Blake's screenplay about a Civil War soldier's relationship with Dakota Indians found its way to Kevin Costner, who was greatly impressed by it. Costner suggested that Blake turn it into a novel, which Blake did. The novel was released with little fanfare, and Costner quickly optioned the work; the two collaborated to write the screenplay for the film. *Dances with Wolves* tells the story of Lt. John Dunbar (Costner) and his journey to a military outpost in the Dakota Territory during the Civil War. The film opens with a wounded Lt. John Dunbar inadvertently leading Union troops to victory on an otherwise stalemated battlefield. Hailed as a hero and allowed to decide where he wants to be stationed, he chooses the Western frontier. Asked by a major, "You wish to see the frontier?" Dunbar responds, "Yes sir, before it's gone."

Arriving at the deserted frontier outpost, Dunbar realizes that he is not only alone, but the only white person for miles. He diligently works at a daily routine that includes recording his experiences in a journal. Dunbar also attempts to befriend a wolf, whom he affectionately nicknames Two Socks for the two white patches of fur on its front paws. Unbeknownst to the isolated soldier, members of a neighboring Sioux Indian tribe are watching him with interest. These native peoples have seen the Spanish and then the Mexicans come and go, but they are convinced that the white man will not leave once he arrives, and they want to learn all they can about him.

Members of the tribe, including the openly disagreeable Wind In His Hair and the more patient and inquisitive Kicking Bird, eventually encounter Dunbar face-to-face. Further meetings ensue, and cultural barriers begin to be broken down. Dunbar dutifully details what occurs at each meeting in his journal, at one point exclaiming, "Nothing I have been told about these people is correct. They are not thieves or beggars. They are not the boogeyman they are made out to be. On the contrary, they are polite guests and I enjoy their humor."



Scene from the 1990 film *Dances with Wolves*, directed by and starring Kevin Costner. (Photofest)

Most of the remainder of the film depicts the growing relationship between Dunbar and the Sioux. Hoping to cross the language barrier and to deepen their conversations, Kicking Bird asks a tribe member named Stands With Fist to act as their translator. Stands With Fist, a white woman who was rescued by the Sioux as a young girl after a Pawnee attack that killed her entire family, is reluctant at first, but acquiesces because she recognizes Dunbar's importance to her tribe. When Kicking Bird and Chief Ten Bears ask Dunbar to tell them how many whites will be coming, the increasingly unsettled Dunbar, now feeling part of the tribe, assures them that many whites will be coming, in fact "as many as the stars in the sky." Dunbar's adoption into the tribe is completed when he is given the name "Dances With Wolves," after his interaction with Two Socks.

Now part of the tribe, Dunbar comes to understand the very different vision of the world that his new community holds. Now, as Dances With Wolves, he participates in both the sacred ritual of the Bison Hunt and a necessary attack on the violent Pawnee. He ultimately marries Stands With Fist and completely rejects his former life. Literally leaving behind the military outpost he had established, Dances With Wolves prepares himself to move with the tribe as the seasons change. Initially exuberant, Dances With Wolves remembers that he has left his journal behind at the outpost. Realizing that the book contains incriminating information, he attempts to retrieve it from the outpost, only to be taken prisoner by newly arrived United States soldiers. They intend to court-martial him for abandoning his post and "turning Injun." Wind In His Hair leads a rescue party that is able to free Dunbar and reunite him with Stands With Fist.

Understanding that more soldiers will come, however, and that they will not rest until they have killed Dunbar, he and Stands With Fist, now caught between two cultures, wander off alone.

One of a number of films that sought to deconstruct the myth of the West, and of the western, *Dances with Wolves* gave expression to the Native American story from the perspective of the “Indians.” Costner utilized the Dakota language for 25 percent of the dialogue in the film, hired over 2,000 Native American extras, and sought the counsel of numerous Native American tribespersons in creating the story. *Dances with Wolves* was nominated for 12 Academy Awards, winning seven, including Best Director (Kevin Costner) and Best Picture (Kevin Costner and Jim Wilson).

See also: Costner, Kevin; Native Americans in Film; Western, The

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—Lucas Calhoun

DAYS OF WINE AND ROSES. Among Hollywood’s most unflinching, complex depictions of alcoholism, and a film notable for the courageous performances of leads Jack Lemmon and Lee Remick, Blake Edwards’s *Days of Wine and Roses* (1962) was not the first major feature to deal with this sensitive topic, but it was groundbreaking nonetheless. Originally a television drama, the film tells the tragic story of San Francisco advertising executive Joe Clay (Lemmon) and his wife, Kirsten (Remick), “social drinkers” who both wind up in the grip of an addiction that destroys their respective careers as well as their marriage. Eventually, Joe turns to Alcoholics Anonymous, but Kirsten resists sobriety to the end, leaving the couple’s future in question.

Days’ refusal to provide audiences with a resolution to its characters’ problems represents just one of several artistic risks taken in the making of the film. Also significant is how the story links alcoholism not principally to the characters’ personal struggles or individual flaws, but to underlying uncertainties in what appears on the surface to be a flourishing society. Whereas Don Birnam (Ray Milland), the main character in the classic *Lost Weekend* (1945)—a film to which *Days* is often compared—is an unsuccessful writer pained by past relationships, Joe appears to live an enviable life. He has a high-paying job working in an office adorned with fashionable abstract art and designer furniture; he woos and marries his client’s beautiful assistant; and the couple moves into a lavish apartment featuring a picture-window view of San Francisco Bay. Why does addiction wreck these apparently successful lives?

To the film’s credit, the answer in *Days* is not obvious. On the one hand, this reflected increasingly influential theories of alcoholism, promulgated by a growing

professional treatment community, as well as by AA, which saw addiction as much in medical as psychological terms. As Joe's AA sponsor (Jack Klugman) explains to him, "It's a lottery, Joe, and you lost." Yet in Edwards's rendition of a script by J. P. Miller, alcoholism also has its origins in the social milieu of American business, in middle-class "fear of falling" (to use Barbara Ehrenreich's term), and in longings for intimacy in not-as-functional-as-they-seem families. Especially in its portrayal of Joe, *Days* seems to argue that alcoholism is a symptom of anxiety within urban postwar America and its abundance-fueled dreams of social mobility. Rejecting his public relations profession, Joe laments, "I'm a garbage man, a eunuch in a harem," and adds that he has failed to make his life better or substantively different than that of his parents, who were vaudeville entertainers. In this respect, the film could be seen as part of a growing critique of middle-class lifestyles found at the same time in the work of writers such as John Cheever and John Updike.

A final key feature of *Days* is the film's depiction of alcoholism as a family disease, one that affects both men and women, often as a codependent pair, as is the case with Joe and Kirsten, who only know how to bond via booze. Unlike female alcoholic characters in films such as *I'll Cry Tomorrow* (1951), Kirsten is not a celebrity or eccentric, but a typical young woman who shrieks when she encounters bugs in her apartment and wishes her father (Charles Bickford), who runs a nursery on the Peninsula south of the city, paid more attention to her. A woman who grew up surrounded by beautiful plants and flowers, Kirsten inexplicably tells Joe, "The world looks so dirty to me when I'm not drinking . . . I want things to look prettier than they are." Kirsten's story suggests that the roots of addiction lie in Americans' constant longing for something more, even though they tend to have more than enough.

Days of Wine and Roses reflected several important developments in the cultural history of alcoholism in the United States, including the receding into the past of temperance crusades and the increasing influence of 12-step programs and treatment specialists. The film marks a shift into an era in which addiction had come to be seen as something more than fodder for tabloids and nightclub comics. Addiction, the film shows, was not simply a foible of quirky characters but a complex ailment located at the very core of American culture.

See also: Melodrama, The

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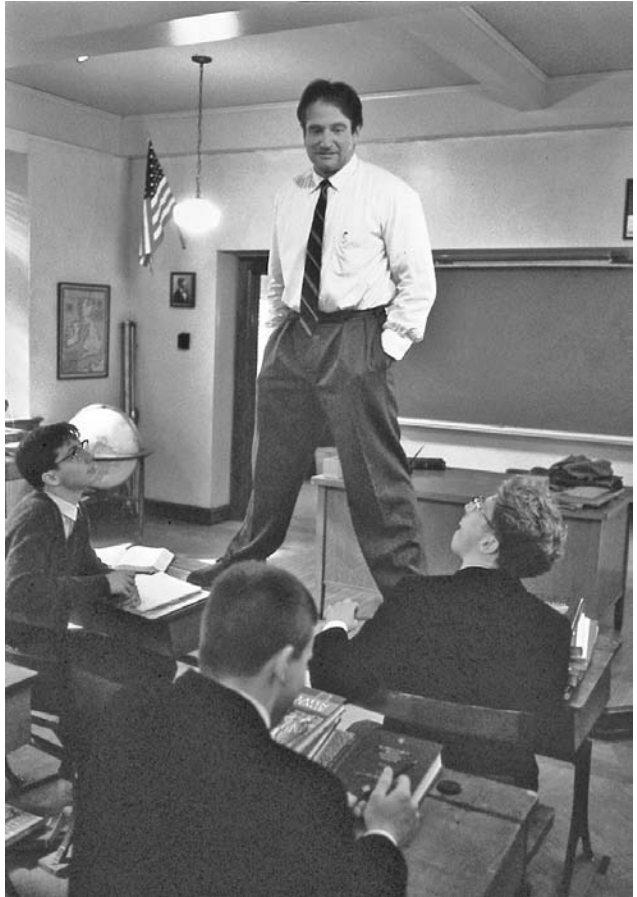
—Kenneth F. Maffitt

DEAD POETS SOCIETY. Although it was forced to vie for audiences with blockbusters such as *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, *Batman*, *License to Kill*, *Ghostbusters II*, *Back to the Future Part II*, and *Lethal Weapon 2* when it was released in the summer of 1989, Peter Weir's small, arty *Dead Poets Society* grossed \$236 million worldwide,

outperforming most of its competitors. Earning an Academy Award for Tom Schulman's original screenplay, as well as nominations for picture, Weir's direction, and Robin Williams's performance as John Keating, *Dead Poets Society* became a contemporary cinematic classic.

Detailing the events of the fall semester of 1959 at Vermont's fictitious Welton Academy, *Dead Poets Society* examines the issue of institutional control during the era of Cold War conformity. Hired to teach courses on poetry, John Keating has returned to Welton, the school that had prepared him for the world when he was a young man. He immediately demonstrates his passion for his subject matter, demanding that his students rip the sterile, academic introductions from their poetry textbooks. *Carpe diem*, gentlemen, seize the day, he tells them. And so they do, embracing the ideas of their unusual—and to Welton administrators, disturbing—new instructor and ultimately reviving the Dead Poets Society that Keating had founded when he was a student at Welton.

Leadership of the next-generation Dead Poets Society falls to Neil Perry (Robert Sean Leonard), an honor student whose unrelenting father (Kurtwood Smith) forbids him from acting in local stage productions, insisting that Neil concentrate on his studies so that he can secure his place at an Ivy League university. Confronting similar family pressure is Neil's roommate, Todd Anderson (Ethan Hawke), the brother of a former Welton valedictorian whose anxiety has given rise to a terror of public speaking. Along with Charlie Dalton (Gale Hansen), Steven Meeks (Allelon Ruggiero), Gerard Pitts (James Waterston), Richard Cameron (Dylan Kussman), and Knox Overstreet (Josh Charles), Neil and Todd convene late-night sessions of the Dead Poets Society in a dark and eerie cave, during which they read poetry and participate in ritualistic, wholly un-Welton-like forms of cathartic expression. Enthused by what Mr. Keating has released in him, Neil takes the part of Puck in a production of *A Midsummer*



Scene from the 1989 film *Dead Poets Society*, directed by Peter Weir and starring Robin Williams. (Photofest)

Night's Dream; when his father discovers what his son has done, he pulls Neil out of Welton and enrolls him in military school. Overwhelmed, Neil commits suicide, and the school uses Keating as a scapegoat, claiming that Neil's participation in the Dead Poets Society is what led him to take his own life. Keating is forced to resign from Welton; but as he exits his classroom for the last time, certain of his charges jump upon their desks—ignoring the demands of their headmaster (Norman Lloyd) to “sit down”—and shout out honorific words for their teacher: “O Captain, my Captain,” the stirring refrain from Walt Whitman's poem in which he declares that “the prize we sought is won.”

Though the film earned a reputation as an inspiring, feel-good piece of cinema, director Weir imbues it with a strong sense of ambiguity. Although a talented, committed teacher, in the end Keating cannot stop his students from involving themselves in juvenile pranks, nor can he mend the relationship between Neil and his father; and although Todd's act of rebellion in the film's soaring climatic scene may be understood as an extraordinary moment of personal release, his hero remains out of a job, Neil is still a victim of the era's repression, and the majority of the academy's students, faculty, and administrators never understand just what it is that Mr. Keating was trying to teach them about life beyond Welton's hallowed halls.

See also: Coming-of-Age Film, The; Melodrama, The

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—Jerod Ra'Del Hollyfield

DEER HUNTER, THE. For almost a decade, the U.S. government deployed American soldiers in Southeast Asia. As U.S. involvement in the conflict increased, the nation's emotions intensified. Although the American people had generally been supportive of the war during the early 1960s, as the decade unfolded and more of the nation's young men died in the jungles of Vietnam, attitudes toward the war began to sour. Images of protests, especially on college campuses, often juxtaposed with images of the war itself, appeared with increasing frequency on nightly newscasts.

Significantly, although dozens of combat pictures had been made by the 1960s about the many conflicts in which the United States had been involved, American filmmakers had been reluctant to turn their attention to movies about Vietnam. This was especially true after more and more voices began to be raised in protest against U.S. involvement in the war, and particularly after it became apparent in 1975 that the



Director Michael Cimino (left) confers with actor Robert De Niro on the set of Cimino's film *The Deer Hunter*. (United Artists/Getty Images)

United States had suffered what was perceived by many in the nation as a shameful defeat in Southeast Asia. With the exception of a few unremarkable pictures, then, it was not until the late 1970s that movies about Vietnam began to be made by U.S. filmmakers. Interestingly, although it was Francis Ford Coppola who would turn out to be the driving force behind the production of combat pictures about Vietnam, his landmark offering, *Apocalypse Now*, did not make its way into theaters until 1979, a year after the release of Hal Ashby's *Coming Home* and Michael Cimino's *The Deer Hunter*.

Unlike the vast majority of American combat pictures that preceded them, *Apocalypse Now*, *Coming Home*, and *The Deer Hunter* all proved to be antiwar films. All of them were also powerful, and highly disturbing, character studies that sought to deconstruct the myth of the members of the American military fighting and dying in order to keep the world "safe for democracy." All three pictures had their own unique characteristics. Ashby's *Coming Home*, adapted from the novel of the same name, focused on veterans struggling to reenter society after their experiences overseas, while Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* focused almost entirely on the soldier's experience of the war itself. Lacking the almost surreal quality of Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*, Cimino's *The Deer Hunter* had a raw, visceral feel that many viewers at the time found deeply unsettling. Cimino's film is admittedly difficult to watch, a fact many attributed

to the picture's length—it runs just over three hours. Yet, even though the picture is much longer than most contemporary studio movies—Cimino took the time to flesh out the elements of his major characters in painstaking detail—*The Deer Hunter* moves along just as it should, slowly, sometimes seeming almost to stand still, much like the lives of the characters it depicts.

It may be argued that *The Deer Hunter* is not really one film but three—a sort of segmented triptych bound together by way of the complex characters who populate the movies-within-the-movie. Cimino gets the first hour-long segment of *The Deer Hunter* just right, as he opens up his narrative by exploring the lives of a group of fast friends who live—exist—in a Pennsylvania steel town. The film opens with a noirish, blue-tinted establishing shot: a dimly lit steel mill just before dawn, framed by a heavy-pillared overpass, smoke billowing from the factory smokestacks. A semi truck enters the frame and roars toward the factory, kicking up snow as it makes its way relentlessly toward some unknown destination. From here, Cimino deftly cuts to a shot of the truck careening around a corner and continuing its mad dash down a road in back of the factory. He allows the camera to linger on the still dark street as the truck passes from view: neon streetlights glow an unearthly green, illuminating slick streets made wet by melting snow; power lines crisscross the sky, inorganic reflections of the leafless, lifeless trees that cannot disguise the cold; a nightclub sign flickers red in the distance. Another cut and we are suddenly inside the hellish heat of the steel mill: sparks fly and flames leap toward the ceiling; heavy machinery moves hulkishly, inexorably; and figures appear—human beings, they must be—dressed up like strange robotic, medieval knights, armored against temperatures from which they cannot be protected.

We are relieved when Cimino takes us from that demonic place, moving us along with the men as they strip off their suits, and make their way up and out of the factory to the world above. In one smothering sequence, Cimino makes us hate the place, and to feel glad that we will not be forced to labor inside those walls; he also allows us to understand that these men will go back inside—that they must go back, over and over again, until their bodies and spirits are too broken to go on. This is their life, and there is little that awaits them outside the factory—their sparsely furnished houses, their beer and whiskey, their love affair with sports, their perversely childish adult male rituals of friendship, their stultifying sexual and romantic relationships.

This is a special day, though, as one of the members of the group, Steven (John Savage) is getting married. Although they have just worked all night, the other members of the group—Rusyn Americans whose families, Ukrainians, Slovaks, Poles, stem from the region around the Carpathian Mountains—head with Steven to a local bar, where they begin drinking. As they stroll to the factory parking lot, Michael (Robert De Niro) suggests that the day is auspicious, that the group should embark on a deer hunting trip later that night. Michael, as it turns out, is the resident philosopher—a spiritual guide whose strength and courage are admired by his friends, but whose ideas about the world they find peculiar. Steven, of course, points out that he is getting married that night, and plans for the deer hunting trip are put aside. There will be hunts, however, although it is never quite clear exactly what their significance might be. “One

shot,” declares Michael, the deer has to be taken with just one shot. One assumes that there will ultimately be some connection made between Michael’s odd spiritual notions about hunting and what goes on in Vietnam, but there never really is—something, it seems, that Cimino gets wrong in his film.

While the men drink throughout the day—one is hard pressed to understand how they will be coherent for the wedding that evening, after working all night and drinking all day—the women prepare for the celebration. Steven is marrying Angela (Rutanya Alda), who, according to Steven’s very old-world mother (Shirley Stoler), is not only a “strange girl”—she is not Rusyn American—but also not “so thin,” if you get her meaning. Angela will seek support from the members of her wedding party, one of whom, Linda (Meryl Streep), is involved with the third member of the trio that will head for Vietnam, Nick (Christopher Walken). We learn at the wedding celebration that evening—an elaborate affair conducted first in a resplendent Russian Orthodox church and then in a local community center equipped with a bar, a stage for the band, and signs indicating that in this community the people are “Serving God and Country Proudly”—that Michael, Nick, and Steven will soon head off to war.

The second segment of *The Deer Hunter* takes us to Vietnam. Here, Cimino seems much less sure of what he is doing with his film. He does not linger long in Vietnam—at least not in the war zone. Once he gets Steven, Nick, and Michael there, they are quickly captured and forced to play out one frightening round of Russian roulette after another for the enjoyment of their captors. It is unclear how often these horrifying games of chance actually took place in Vietnam, or if they took place at all, but Cimino is not concerned with the historical accuracy of these scenes, using them rather as microcosmic expressions of the overarching idea of both the brutality and the senselessness of war. The sequences in Vietnam, however, fail to get this point across, as they seem to be more about demonstrating Michael’s extraordinary courage, commitment, and resignation to the terrible task at hand than they do about communicating a message about the horrors of war.

Initially terrified at the prospect of playing Russian roulette, Nick ultimately becomes obsessed with it. Cimino leaves him in Vietnam, a psychologically anesthetized figure who becomes a local legend known for his willingness to take his chances with the game—with a great deal of money on the line—and the eerie length of time he has survived. In the end, the game will cost him his life. Steven is returned to America; legless and emotionally broken, he languishes in a veterans’ hospital until he is taken back home by Michael. The last segment of *The Deer Hunter* focuses on Michael—in particular on how much he has been changed by his experiences in Vietnam. Unwilling to celebrate his successes fighting for his country—a patch on his uniform identifies him as an Army Ranger and his service stripes indicate that he has served for three years—Michael is reluctant to discuss what he has gone through. Once home, he seeks out Linda, to whom he has always been drawn. Bound through Nick, and through the loss of him to the war, they begin a romantic relationship that seems tender and tortured in the same moment. Cimino eventually brings the friends back together—at Nick’s funeral. Gathered together at the bar after the burial, the friends sing a stanza of “God Bless America” and raise a final toast to Nick.

Assuming that he meant his ending to be taken seriously, it is certainly heavy-handed, especially given all that has come before—for three hours Cimino appeared to be saying that the idea of proudly serving God and country, at least in relationship to the Vietnam War, was naive; and then “God Bless America,” an ending suitable for the dozens of prowar films that had preceded *The Deer Hunter*. Perhaps, though, Cimino was saying something important about family, friends, and community—perhaps he was saying that they stand with us against an all too often senseless world.

See also: War Film, The

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—Jennifer Lyons-Hunt

DELIVERANCE. Director-producer John Boorman sets *Deliverance* in a Georgia river valley soon to be flooded by a hydroelectric dam. Taking a last opportunity to canoe the river are four suburbanites: Lewis (Burt Reynolds), a macho weekend outdoorsman; Ed (Jon Voight), Lewis’s domesticated foil; Bobby (Ned Beatty), a buffoon who condescends to the locals; and Drew (Ronny Cox), a quiet, contemplative soul. Before their journey, the men stop at a gas station where Drew on guitar and a retarded local boy on banjo play “Dueling Banjos,” a traditional bluegrass piece that serves as the score of *Deliverance* and has since become synonymous with the film. As the canoe trip commences, a vertiginous tracking shot affords us Drew’s point of view. He paddles under a bridge and looks up at the banjoist swinging his instrument, suggesting a pendulum clock and foreshadowing Drew’s few remaining hours.

After a day of canoeing, the men are camping, drinking, and joking, when Lewis hears a suspicious sound. In one lengthy take, Lewis walks off-camera to investigate, leaving the three frightened men on-screen, and then reenters the shot in a striking close-up, startling his friends. Lewis finds nothing, but the unusual take suggests possible unseen threats. The next morning, Ed cannot steady his nerves to shoot a deer, indicating that he is unprepared to face these threats.

The men then endure a series of ordeals. Two armed mountain men assault Bobby and Ed. Bobby is raped; Ed nearly so. Lewis kills one attacker, but the other escapes. Drew insists that the law demands they report the incident, but the canoeists vow to remain silent, bury the dead man, and continue downriver. Drew then inexplicably falls overboard and disappears. Confused, the remaining three capsize and are washed through violent rapids. Lewis, badly injured, claims that Drew was shot. Fearing their attacker’s return, the men hide in a gorge. Ed scales the cliff where they believe their



Actors (from left) Ned Beatty, Burt Reynolds, Jon Voight, and Ronny Cox pull their canoes through the shallows of a river in a still from director John Boorman's film *Deliverance*. (Warner Bros./Getty Images)

attacker has taken position, kills a rifleman, and injures himself in the fight. The men dump the corpse in the river and continue downstream. Doubts plague them. Was Drew shot? Did Ed kill the right man? Next, they discover Drew's corpse but find no obvious bullet wound, increasing their uncertainty. They sink Drew's body and concoct a cover story.

The survivors arrive in a town that will soon be flooded by the dam, and receive quiet sympathy from some elderly locals and medical attention. *Deliverance* novelist-screenwriter James Dickey plays the local sheriff, who deduces what has occurred but lacks sufficient evidence to make arrests. The film ends with Ed at home dreaming of a hand emerging from the water—a recurring image in Boorman's films.

The thematic tension of *Deliverance*, like that of many Boorman films, lies between civilization—associated with domesticity, law, and pampered decadence—and nature—associated with aggression, anarchy, and a brutal but uncompromised authenticity. Lewis tries to connect with nature, bemoans the destruction of “the last wild, untamed, unpolluted . . . river,” and characterizes the valley's development as a “rape” of the wilderness. However, Lewis, a product of civilization, fails to connect with nature. In a line characteristic of the film's resonant dialogue, Drew states, “He learned [the woods]. He doesn't feel them. That's Lewis's problem. He wants to be one with nature, and he can't hack it.” Nature exacts vengeance. As civilization metaphorically rapes the valley,

nature's symbolic representatives rape Bobby. Drew, who insisted on society's laws, dies on the river. Ed's nightmare implies that the ordeal will always haunt the survivors.

Boorman's cinematography emphasizes nature's beauty and power, particularly that of rushing water. The 1.66:1 aspect ratio showcases the wide valley's lush greens, colors both magical and foreboding throughout Boorman's films. Tellingly, the deepest greens appear in the grove where Bobby is assaulted and the mossy gorge atop of which Ed commits murder.

The film's title suggests rescue and salvation but is tinged with irony. Though the survivors are delivered from their ordeal, they are not truly saved. Indeed, they are threatened with another kind of deliverance: a guilty verdict. Seeking salvation, Drew and Bobby pray in moments of hardship ("Lord, deliver us . . ."). However, religion, one of civilization's institutions, offers only fleeting solace—an idea symbolized by the relocation of a church, the first building the canoeists see after their ordeal. Its bell tolling ominously, the church is trucked out of the valley to avoid the rising waters. In Boorman's vision, the deliverance promised by society's institutions is a transient delusion.

See also: Action-Adventure Film, The

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—Eric L. Sarlin

DIE HARD. In addition to launching a very successful series that has yielded four films to date, *Die Hard* (1988) established Bruce Willis as one of America's most popular action movie heroes. Fresh from *Moonlighting*, the ABC television series in which he played private investigator David Addison, Willis created a similarly likeable character as the indefatigable, wisecracking New York City cop, John McClane.

With a script by Jeb Stuart and Steven E. de Souza that was loosely based on Roderick Thorp's 1979 novel *Nothing Lasts Forever*, director John McTiernan set out to make an action movie with an everyday, imperfect hero. The character and film struck the right chord in the late 1980s, and *Die Hard* made over \$80 million in U.S. box-office receipts.

Die Hard begins on Christmas Eve. Officer McClane flies to California, hoping to reconcile with his estranged wife, Holly (Bonnie Bedelia), who moved to L.A. for her job at the Nakatomi Corporation. During her company's Christmas party, international terrorists storm Nakatomi's high-rise headquarters and begin taking hostages. McClane, who was relaxing in Holly's office when the terrorists arrived, escapes to the upper floors and overhears the terrorist leader, Hans Gruber (Alan Rickman), planning to take \$640 million in bearer bonds from the building's vault. When Gruber shoots Nakatomi executive Jo Takagi (James Shigeta) for refusing to give him the vault's combination, McClane realizes he must act to foil their plan. Taunting and outmatching the terrorists



Scene from the 1988 film *Die Hard*, directed by John McTiernan and starring Bruce Willis. (Photofest)

with his relentless banter and perseverance, McClane picks them off one by one until only Gruber is left, holding Holly at gunpoint. Ultimately, McClane outwits Gruber and is reunited with Holly.

Like many Reagan-era macho movies, *Die Hard* attempts to revitalize a traditional notion of American masculinity after decades of decline precipitated by defeat in Vietnam, the loss of manufacturing jobs, and the gradual encroachments of feminism. At the start, McClane is a blue-collar cop in danger of losing his white-collar wife. His conservative East Coast values appear out of touch with progressive California, where a man kisses him after wishing him Merry Christmas. He is awed by the affluence of the Nakatomi Corporation, visually represented by the towering skyscraper, and clearly signifying Japan at the height of its economic power. Gradually, however, McClane's rugged individualism proves superior to his adversaries. He not only single-handedly defeats the team of highly skilled European terrorists, but he does so in spite of the LAPD and FBI, incompetent bureaucracies that, in their ignorance, thwart him at every turn. By the end, McClane leaves the Nakatomi building in flames. With Holly at his side, he is unquestionably the hero.

What separates *Die Hard* from other Reagan era macho movies is the way it highlights its hero's vulnerabilities. Although Willis clearly buffed up for the role, he does not display the sculpted physique of iconic 1980s action heroes like Arnold Schwarzenegger or Sylvester Stallone. The prominent scar on his left shoulder and his receding hairline mark Willis as a flawed, average-guy hero. He has no specialized training apart from

being a New York cop. When Gruber derisively calls him a cowboy, McClane does not identify with John Wayne but Roy Rogers, better known for his singing than gunslinging. The most obvious sign of McClane's vulnerability is that he is barefoot throughout the movie. In a key scene in which McClane is pulling shards of broken glass from his feet, he apologizes for not understanding all that his wife has endured to gain her position.

Despite these efforts to undermine its macho hero, *Die Hard* takes a reactionary stance toward feminism. Holly may be a successful business executive, but she still relies on her husband to save her. At the film's climax, McClane frees Holly from Hans Gruber's dangerous grip by unclasping the Rolex watch she was given by Nakatomi's president. At the end, when McClane introduces her to a fellow officer using her maiden name, Gennaro, she corrects him, calling herself Holly McClane.

With its entertaining portrayal of 1980s cultural conflicts, and its title subtly alluding to the president's survival of an assassination attempt early in his first term, *Die Hard* may be the ultimate Reagan-era movie.

See also: Action-Adventure Film, The; Hard-Boiled Detective Film, The

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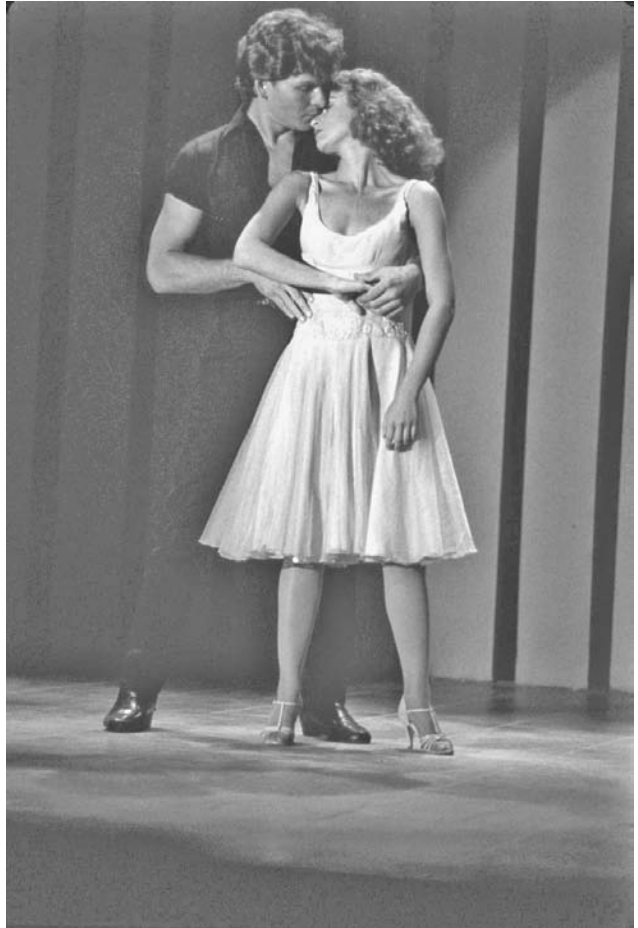
—Joseph Christopher Schaub

DIRTY DANCING. "That was the summer of 1963, when everybody called me Baby, and it didn't occur to me to mind . . . , when I couldn't wait to join the Peace Corps, when I thought I'd never find a guy as great as my dad." So says the main character Frances "Baby" Houseman (Jennifer Grey) in the opening voice-over of the 1987 musical-romance *Dirty Dancing*. Thinking back to her experiences as an innocent, and initially hopelessly naive 17-year-old, Frances whisks us back to a 1960s world marked by erotic dance, sex, passion, love, and unsettling expressions of class conflict, racial marginalization, and gender oppression.

At the vacation resort, Kellerman's, where Baby and her upper-middle-class Jewish family escape the city, she is rescued from what appears to be yet another terminally boring summer, when she meets the worldly dance instructor Johnny Castle (Patrick Swayze), who is part of the working-class entertainment staff. Behind closed doors, she is introduced to, and then literally seduced by, the staff's "dirty dancing." When Johnny's dance partner, Penny Johnson (Cynthia Rhodes), gets pregnant, Baby, rapidly emerging from her infancy, secures money from her father for an illegal abortion and becomes Johnny's secret dance partner as he readies himself for an important

performance. Over the course of a few short days, largely spent in grueling practice sessions, Johnny not only teaches Baby to dance, but the two become lovers, violating the clearly defined class boundaries that define the communal relations at the resort. When Baby's strict but kindhearted doctor-father (played by the wonderfully endearing Jerry Orbach) finds out that Penny's abortion has been botched, he treats her, despite the legal and cultural ramifications. Disturbed by these sordid events and Baby's participation in them, however, and mistakenly believing that it was Johnny who had impregnated Penny, Dr. Houseman demands that Baby stay away from her "man" and his unsavory crowd. Ignoring her father's orders, Baby steals off and performs with Johnny. Much to Baby's dismay, Johnny is subsequently wrongly accused of stealing wallets from guests; and even though Baby provides an alibi, pointing out that she was with him when the thefts occurred, he nevertheless loses his job. On Baby's last evening at the resort, however, he returns and boldly strides up to the table where she sits disconsolately with her family. Uttering the clichéd and yet strangely poignant line, "Nobody puts Baby in a corner," Johnny takes his love in his arms and whisks her up onto the stage. In a last, rousing dirty dance of the season, during which all cultural barriers tumble down and it seems that Baby has, ironically, gotten a man very much like her strong, ethical father after all, everything is reconciled.

Dirty Dancing was a huge box-office hit, especially among teenagers, and earned an Academy Award for "(I've Had) The Time of My Life" as Best Original Song. Although dancing had obviously been a large part of many other musicals before this film was released, it had rarely been shown in quite such a provocative manner. Significantly, dancing functions on multiple levels in the film, exposing the class, racial, and gender tensions that haunted 1980s America. For example, when dancing among



Scene from the 1987 film *Dirty Dancing*, directed by Emile Ardolino and starring Patrick Swayze and Jennifer Grey. (Photofest)

themselves, literally on the margins of the resort where they are housed, the staff members exude an erotic energy and sensual intimacy that seems to meld them together into a wildly passionate communal whole; while dancing with their cultural “superiors” in the resort’s centrally located activity hall, however, the staff members’ movements are staid and emotionless, expressing the vast distance that exists between the groups even while these group members are literally joined together. Set in the 1960s, yet plainly a cautionary tale about the repressive attitudes that characterized the Reagan years, *Dirty Dancing* may be seen as a popular, and then contemporary, attempt to transgress authoritarian and conformist culture boundaries. Building on the success of iconic films such as *West Side Story* (1961) and *Saturday Night Fever* (1977), *Dirty Dancing* gave expression to the angst-filled experiences of a new teen generation. Although it cannot be considered “great filmmaking,” the picture remains topical and is still popular among latter-day teens.

See also: Coming-of-Age Film, The

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—Daniela Ribitsch

DIRTY HARRY. Don Siegel’s *Dirty Harry* depicts an iconoclastic San Francisco cop on a crusade against a psychotic criminal. Ostensibly based on the real-life Zodiac killer who had terrorized the Bay Area during the 1960s, the character of Scorpio (Andy Robinson) has no qualms about targeting minorities, Catholic priests, and young women. Although Inspector Harry Callahan—one of Clint Eastwood’s iconic film roles—captures Scorpio, the District Attorney is forced to turn him loose on a legal technicality. Callahan, it seems, violated Scorpio’s civil rights in bringing him to justice: he failed to Mirandize his prisoner, tortures him, and confiscates his weapon without a search warrant. Harry is fully aware he has violated Scorpio’s rights. His rationale? He was racing against a deadline to rescue a helpless kidnap victim that Scorpio had buried with a limited supply of oxygen. Despite Callahan’s warnings that Scorpio will strike again if he is released—“He likes it,” says Harry—the District Attorney frees the prisoner. Not surprisingly, Scorpio does strike again: he hijacks a school bus loaded with children and demands \$200,000 in ransom money and a jetliner. Capitulating to Scorpio’s demands, Harry’s superiors call on the disgruntled cop to serve as a liaison between the city and the madman, a call he refuses. Instead, Callahan takes matters into

his own hands. He chases Scorpio down, kills him, and, disgusted by a legal system in which the rights of criminals seem to come before the rights of their victims, hurls away his badge.

Significantly, *Dirty Harry* was not forged in a vacuum, but grew out of the politically turbulent 1960s. In the 1966 *Miranda v. Arizona* case, Chief Justice Earl Warren and the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that individuals in police custody had certain constitutional guarantees when authorities questioned them about crimes. The court enacted this mandate so suspects and prisoners would not be forced into incriminating confessions. Although the Constitution states that authorities have no right to compel an individual to act as a witness against him or herself, police were not required to inform the suspect that anything said could be used against them. The *Miranda* ruling changed

everything. Authorities now had to advise suspects and prisoners about the right to counsel before and during police interrogation. Furthermore, suspects and prisoners had to waive their rights before questioning could commence. Enraged citizens and police complained that the Supreme Court had gone “soft on criminals.”

Dirty Harry not only redefined police procedural thrillers as political discourses for decades to come, but it also captured the ambivalent feelings that law enforcement held about the *Miranda* legislation. Most hard-boiled detective films depicted their heroic protagonists blatantly ignoring the rights of suspects. Siegel’s highly politicized film galvanized public debate over victims’ rights. Liberals criticized *Dirty Harry* as a law-and-order manifesto, while conservatives hailed it as a “justice-at-any-cost” masterpiece. Interestingly, even Siegel was ambivalent about the film. A political liberal, Siegel found himself at odds with Callahan’s conduct. As the director told an interviewer after the film was released, “This doesn’t mean I agree with him.”

See also: Action-Adventure Film, The; Eastwood, Clint; Hard-Boiled Detective Film, The



Actor Clint Eastwood as Inspector “Dirty” Harry Callahan in a scene from Don Siegel’s thriller *Dirty Harry*, 1971. (Silver Screen Collection/Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

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—*Van Roberts*

DO THE RIGHT THING. Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing* (1989) explores racial tension and associated socioeconomic problems in Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood. Inspired by incidents such as the 1983 arrest and subsequent death of graffiti artist Michael Stewart and the 1986 racially motivated attacks in New York's Howard Beach, the film takes place over a 24-hour period of intense summer heat and follows protagonist Mookie (Lee), an African American pizza delivery man, as he navigates his way through work, family, and his neighbors, many of whom will riot by film's end.

The film's characters represent various ethnic populations and, in some cases, evoke racial stereotypes. We meet Sal (Danny Aiello), an Italian American pizzeria owner and Mookie's employer; Sal's two sons, one of whom, Pino (John Turturro), is an outspoken racist; Jade (Joie Lee), Mookie's pragmatic sister who insists he behave responsibly and find more lucrative employment; Tina (Rosie Perez), a quick-tempered Puerto Rican woman who makes similar demands of Mookie and is the mother of his child; Buggin' Out (Giancarlo Esposito), an angry black radical who organizes a boycott of Sal's pizzeria; Radio Raheem (Bill Nunn), an intimidating African American man whose



Director Spike Lee on the set of *Do the Right Thing*, 1989. (Photofest)

boombox constantly blares rap group Public Enemy's "Fight the Power"; Da Mayor (Ossie Davis), the neighborhood drunk and attenuated village elder; Mother Sister (Ruby Dee), the community matriarch who is critical of Da Mayor's behavior; Smiley, a mentally challenged African American who sells photographs of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr.; Mister Señor Love Daddy (Samuel Jackson), a DJ whose on-air badinage narrates the story; and a Korean couple who own the local bodega.

Lee's frenetic composition and fast-paced editing underscore the film's conflicts. Radio Raheem appears larger than life in Dutch tilts and in-your-face, wide-angle close-ups. In one such shot, Raheem borrows dialogue from *The Night of the Hunter* (1955) to explain to a shaky, handheld camera how love defeats hate, the two emotions symbolized by the gold jewelry on his hands. Raheem's assertion is laden with dramatic irony in light of the circumstances of his death later in the film. In another striking sequence—one that interrupts the film's otherwise traditional narrative progression—characters directly address dollying cameras and deliver angry, racist soliloquies. Colorful costumes add to the film's visual intensity and serve as metaphors for ethnic diversity. Coupled with the oppressive summer heat, the *mise-en-scène* suggests a community approaching the boiling point.

Poverty and economic disparity fuel the interpersonal and racial tensions. Repeatedly, characters are admonished to "get a job." Jade, Mother Sister, and other characters accuse Mookie, Da Mayor, and others of laziness or irresponsibility. Though the community is largely African American and Puerto Rican, Korean Americans and Italian Americans own the local businesses. Clifton (John Savage), the neighborhood's only apparent homeowner, is of northern European descent, drawing attention to the issue of gentrification. The entitlements of white and Asian property owners engender additional hostility within the black and Puerto Rican community.

This hostility comes to a head when Buggin' Out organizes a boycott to compel Sal to add photographs of African Americans to his "Wall of Fame" honoring Italian American celebrities. Though Raheem and Smiley participate in the boycott, other neighbors decline, citing their friendship with Sal or dismissing the matter as inconsequential. As Sal's restaurant closes for the day, the boycotters storm the pizzeria and renew their demands, while "Fight the Power" blasts from Raheem's radio. Prior to this, Sal had been a conscientious, charitable citizen, expressing gratitude for the patronage of the minority community and challenging Pino's racism. However, with the boycotters' intrusion, Sal erupts with racist epithets and smashes Raheem's radio. The ensuing brawl brings the police, who arrest Buggin' Out and kill Raheem as he violently resists. Mookie joins the crowd the incident has drawn and incites a riot that sets the pizzeria ablaze. As the chaos ebbs, Smiley hangs a photo of Malcolm X and King on Sal's wall, and smiles at what seems to him a successful conclusion of the boycott.

This resolution is ambiguous. Did Mookie and his neighbors do the right thing by rioting? Was the boycott a trivial matter that ended tragically or a worthwhile fight in the name of equality and cultural identity? Can a diverse neighborhood function, or is the balkanization favored by some of the characters preferable? The film ends with two quotations: one from King denouncing violence as self-defeating and another

from Malcolm X equating violence in self-defense with intelligence. The viewer is left to decide which perspective constitutes “the right thing.”

See also: African Americans in Film; Lee, Spike

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—Eric L. Sarlin

DOUBLE INDEMNITY. Billy Wilder’s *Double Indemnity* is seen today as one of the best examples of the film noir genre; but even at its initial release in 1944, long before the “noir” label had been affixed by French film critics to crime melodramas of this era, audiences recognized that this film confronted them with a compelling narrative of self-consuming desire and fated death. Based on a novel by James M. Cain (first published in 1936), *Double Indemnity* posed a seemingly insurmountable problem for Wilder and his co-writer Raymond Chandler, as they set to work adapting Cain’s violent and salacious novel to the screen. The Production Code, which, for over three decades determined what American filmmakers could place before audiences, virtually forbade any open representation of sexuality and demanded that criminal acts be punished unequivocally and with finality. Cain’s novel, however, turns on the actions of two adulterous lovers who plot the murder of a man and the theft of thousands of dollars in insurance payments (the “double indemnity” clause that gives the story its title). The fact that Cain evokes a measure of empathy for his killers, or at least withholds judgment against them by allowing them to explain their morally deviant emotions, was seen as a challenge to the rigid moralism of the Code, and threatened to scuttle the project before it began. To satisfy his censors, and to tone down the amoral detachment of Cain’s novel, Wilder went so far as to shoot a final scene in which his male protagonist is seen going to his death in the gas chamber, only to cut that scene entirely from the final version of the movie—presumably because his principal characters had already been punished enough to satisfy conservative moral standards. Nevertheless, executives at Paramount initially doubted that Wilder could adapt a subject that defied established standards of good taste, and when the film was passed over for several Academy Awards, that seemed to confirm earlier suspicions that *Double Indemnity* was simply too daring for its time.

Still, for all its notoriety, *Double Indemnity* drew a sufficiently large audience to insure that Wilder would remain on Paramount’s A-list of directors, and much of the success of this film derives from the extraordinary performances of its principal actors. Barbara Stanwyck’s portrayal of Phyllis Dietrichson—a heartless and homicidal femme fatale—startled audiences in the ’40s, and even today her icy determination to betray and destroy all of the men in her life still has the power to shock and dismay. Her



Scene from the 1944 film *Double Indemnity* with Barbara Stanwyck, Fred MacMurray, and Edward G. Robinson. (Apic/Getty Images)

amorality may represent either a belated recognition of the new economic power and psychological independence that working women had achieved during wartime, or (negatively viewed) a more intense and open misogyny than anyone in Hollywood had, to that point, felt free to express. In contrast, Edward G. Robinson's Barton Keyes—a blustering but ultimately soft-hearted claims manager for the “All Risk” insurance company—serves as the emotional and moral center of this film, providing a bracingly unambiguous judgment of the hopelessly corrupt world around him, while at the same time expressing an unexpectedly ambivalent and even empathic view of a friend and colleague who is driven to commit murder and fraud.

That colleague, Walter Neff, portrayed by Fred MacMurray, assumes throughout the film the role of both criminal and judge, as he plots the murder of Phyllis's husband and passes judgment on his own character at every juncture of the story. By allowing Neff to narrate this film, Wilder accomplishes two objectives: He allows the audience to glimpse his character's ineffectual struggle to resist the criminal impulses that will ultimately destroy him, while at the same time conveying (paradoxically) a sense of inevitability, as Neff repeatedly compares his situation to that of someone riding a trolley car to the last stop—“straight down the line”—with no hope of arresting the engine of fate that he has set in motion. The very fact that this film unfolds through a series of voice-over flashbacks insures that once we have returned to present time we will be convinced that the past is more than merely a prologue to the present: it has become its determining force.

Wilder's choice of Fred MacMurray as his male lead was in part fortuitous, as the studio's preferred "stars" turned him down, one after another. It was at that point in the casting process that Wilder turned to MacMurray: a second-tier actor who had appeared only in comedies, and who openly doubted that he could carry off a tragic role. Evidently, what Wilder was looking for was an actor who could project at least a measure of decency and remorse, and who would serve as a dramatic foil to Stanwyck's relentless and incorrigibly evil nature. As an insurance agent who takes "all risks" for either love or money, MacMurray's Walter Neff is as much a victim of his own character flaws as the perpetrator of unforgivable crimes, and all the more believable for his confusion.

Film historians tend to focus on two remarkable aspects of this film: its hard-edged dialogue and its atmospheric photography. The latter achievement is the work of John Seitz, *Double Indemnity*'s director of photography, whose moody low-key lighting and tight framing soon became the visual signature of later noir movies. The fast-paced and often sardonic dialogue, however, was the collaborative achievement of Wilder and Chandler, who tried to fashion speech patterns that not only echoed the lingo of hard-boiled detective fiction of this period, but also that captured the cynicism and desperation of the antiheroes whose crimes and punishments form the dramatic focus of this film.

See also: Film Noir; Hard-Boiled Detective Film, The; Wilder, Billy

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—Robert Platzner

DR. STRANGELOVE. Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove, Or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*, is the second film in what amounts to an antiwar trilogy, beginning with *Paths of Glory* (1957) and concluding with *Full Metal Jacket* (1987). Each of these films has its own special take on what Kubrick saw as the insanity of war, but of the three, *Dr. Strangelove* is the most obviously satiric and self-consciously surreal account of a warrior culture that Kubrick directed.

Using Peter George's novel *Red Alert*—first published in Britain under the title *Two Hours to Doom*—as his initial inspiration, Kubrick initially intended to create a cold-war melodrama focused on the dangers of an accidental nuclear holocaust, and the early drafts of his script (entitled, alternately, *Edge of Doom* and *The Delicate Balance*) suggest that he wanted to remain as close as possible to the literary original. But at some early point in the evolution of his script, Kubrick's concept of this film took a sharp turn toward dark comedy, and with the assistance of screenwriter Terry

Southern, he refashioned his characters and plot—not to mention the subtitle of his film—into a mixture of apocalyptic fantasy and farce.

In spite of its comic mayhem, though, the narrative structure of *Dr. Strangelove* is rather tightly controlled, and Kubrick moves his plot along by employing a constantly shifting mise-en-scène, cutting from one set location and personality to a second to a third. The first locale, “Burlington” Air Force Base, is an operational center for the Strategic Air Command, and its commanding general, Jack D. Ripper, is quite clearly insane. Played by Sterling Hayden with appropriate manic intensity, General Ripper (not unlike his criminal namesake) is suffering from both homicidal impulses and paranoid delusions, and his decision to send a fleet of nuclear-armed B-52s hurtling toward Russia sets Kubrick’s plot in motion. His second-in-command, Group Captain Mandrake (one of three roles



Actor Slim Pickens sits atop a nuclear weapon prop during production of the movie *Dr. Strangelove, or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*, directed by Stanley Kubrick. (AP/Wide World Photos)

played by Peter Sellers) tries unsuccessfully to dissuade Ripper from carrying out this mission, but he soon discovers that Ripper is mad as a hatter, and that he cannot convince Ripper that fluoridated water is not a “Commie” plot, nor that the general’s sexual impotence has nothing to do with an imagined Russian invasion. Ripper’s sexual dysfunction, in fact, serves not only as the absurd catalyst for irrational command decisions but also as a metaphor for even scarier patterns of irrational behavior at the highest levels of political power.

From the claustrophobic confines of General Ripper’s base office, whose blinds are kept tightly shut, we cut to the second locale: the even more cloistral interior of a B-52, commanded by Major T. J. “King” Kong. Slim Pickens plays Major Kong as a seemingly low-keyed, good-old-boy Texan, complete with ten-gallon hat, whose first reaction to the order to attack is to suspect that his crew has been playing a practical joke on him. Once convinced that the order is real, however, “King” Kong puts on his warrior-persona and exhorts his crew to patriotic duty in one of the film’s more

memorably comic speeches. Interestingly, though, for all his outlandishness, Kong emerges as a loyal and resourceful officer, and our last image of him is both laughable and strangely poignant, as he rides a nuclear bomb to its destination, astride his weapon as if he were riding a rodeo steer. Throughout these B-52 scenes we hear the familiar battle song “When Johnny Comes Marching Home” on the soundtrack, and as in *Full Metal Jacket*, one cannot be entirely certain that Kubrick doesn’t secretly admire the desperate heroism of his soldier-protagonists.

The third locale—arguably the most important from the perspective of political satire—is the Pentagon War Room where President Merkin Muffley has assembled the Joint Chiefs, the Russian Ambassador, and a German scientific advisor whose prosthetic arm is forever attempting to give the Nazi salute. Peter Sellers’s talent for verbal mimicry and playing multiple characters is put to the test during these scenes as he switches from the bland American speech patterns of President Muffley to the heavily accented Germanic English of Dr. Strangelove, with all of the personality quirks that go along with each character. Sellers’s *Strangelove* is a masterpiece of satiric caricature: a mad scientist whose ideas about nuclear war and personal survival are so fundamentally evil that he periodically loses control of both his mind and his voice, and imagining himself back in Nazi Germany he finally shouts out “Mein Fuehrer” when addressing the American president.

Strangelove’s comic counterpart in these scenes is the head of the Strategic Air Command, General “Buck” Turgidson (George C. Scott in one of his many over-the-top performances). Turgidson is widely believed to be a caricature of the real-life head of the Air Force during the 1950s and ’60s, General Curtis LeMay, whose bluster and anti-Communist vitriol made him a favorite target for leftist satire; but Scott’s oversexed and overbearing Turgidson is torn between his desire to annihilate the “Russkies” and his faltering realization that any attack against Russia will result in mutual annihilation. Kubrick’s original script called for a food-fight between Turgidson and the Russian ambassador (amusingly called De Sadesky: i.e., De Sade), and though, happily, he scrapped that scene, Kubrick’s consistent view of the War Room and its inhabitants is that no one, during this mother-of-all crises, ever manages to behave like a morally responsible adult.

Kubrick’s final version of nuclear apocalypse takes the form of the Russian Doomsday Machine—a computer-operated system that responds automatically and with maximum lethality to a perceived attack on the Motherland—which we ultimately discover cannot be deprogrammed or outsmarted in any way. It is, in effect, more intelligent than any merely human brain, and it emerges by the end of the film as Kubrick’s central trope for both the savage mindlessness of modern warfare and the equally mindless fatalism that seems to infect our ruling class. As mushroom cloud follows mushroom cloud in the film’s final frames, and while the lyrics of a popular World War II song (“We’ll meet again, don’t know where, don’t know when”) ring in our ears, Kubrick’s disarming and deceptive subtitle comes into ironic focus at last: we have every reason to worry and fear the latent nihilism of our conflict-ridden age.

See also: War Film, The

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—Robert Platzner

DRIVING MISS DAISY. Based on the Pulitzer Prize–winning play by Alfred Uhry, Bruce Beresford’s *Driving Miss Daisy* (1989) is a deceptively simple story about two outsiders living in postwar Atlanta, Georgia. Told from the perspective of Daisy Werthan (Jessica Tandy), a proud old Jewish lady with considerable wealth, the film chronicles the delicate relationship she fosters with Hoke Colburn (Morgan Freeman), her black chauffeur. The film is pleasant, if at times idealistic, but it is also sincere, and through its sincerity manages to capture a truth about American race relations many films ignore: the problem of *latent* racism. Daisy doesn’t consider herself prejudiced, and in fact scoffs at her son for even suggesting it; but through her interactions with Hoke the audience begins to see that while she may not exhibit the characteristics attributed to ideological racists like George Wallace, her own dormant prejudices are just as damning. In this way, Beresford’s film illuminates a social problem pertinent



Scene from the 1989 film *Driving Miss Daisy*, directed by Bruce Beresford and starring Morgan Freeman and Jessica Tandy. (Photofest)

to post-civil rights America, but does so in a traditional format through a straightforward narrative rooted in themes of compassion and understanding.

The changes in Daisy's attitude toward black folk happen over a 25-year period (1948–1973), during which she is forced to confront, and reevaluate, her racist opinions based on her dealings with Hoke, who is hired by Daisy's son, Boolie (Dan Aykroyd), to chauffeur her around town after she backs her car into the neighbor's yard. Hoke is patient with the stubborn Daisy, who initially refuses his services, and eventually wears her down. As the narrative unfolds, Hoke is revealed to be smart and savvy; a man who knows how to work southern whites to get what he wants. His calm, pleasant disposition enables him to subvert Daisy's authority without making it seem like a transgression has taken place. Witness the scene where Hoke replaces a can of salmon he took from Daisy's pantry because he found the pork chops she left for him too stiff, or when he defiantly pulls the car to the side of the road to relieve himself because no gas station would allow him to use their restrooms. As the years progress, Daisy and Hoke warm to one another, though the residue of Daisy's earlier prejudice continues to linger. After her Temple is bombed by a group of white supremacists, Hoke links the event to his own memory of seeing his childhood friend's father hanging dead from a tree, the victim of a lynch mob, but she refuses to see the connection. Later she goes to a fund-raising dinner to hear Martin Luther King Jr. speak. As she sits in the banquet hall with an empty seat beside her, Hoke stays in the car waiting for her return. This troubling scene acts as the film's climax. The change that occurs between the two characters here is never committed to dialogue; rather, it is communicated through their facial expressions as the voice of Dr. King narrates the subtext of the scene. Finally, by the late 1960s, aged and senile, Daisy reveals to Hoke what her own prejudices have prevented her from recognizing all along: "Hoke, you're my best friend."

Interestingly, *Driving Miss Daisy* was released during the same year as Spike Lee's incendiary allegory of post-civil rights American race relations, *Do the Right Thing*. The two films could not have been more dissimilar in their content and reception. While *Daisy* was showered with critical attention, including nine Academy Award nominations, *Do the Right Thing*'s bold exposition of simmering racial hostilities in 1980s urban America polarized critics, some of whom anticipated riots would erupt after screenings. Today, Lee's picture is frequently regarded as the most important film about American race prejudice, yet despite this, *Daisy* still has much to offer contemporary audiences, especially in the way it exposes the damaging effects of latent racism on human relations. More than this, however, it also shows the value of compassion and understanding—two qualities needed to overcome the trials present in post-civil rights America.

See also: African Americans in Film

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—Ryan J. Kirkby

DUCK SOUP. *Duck Soup* (1933) is considered by many to be the Marx Brothers' finest movie. It is pure satire, taking jabs at government, war, diplomacy, and affairs of state. It was so well done that Benito Mussolini banned it in Italy after seeing its stance on fascism and totalitarianism. The brothers were very proud of that fact. The movie lacked the harp and piano scenes and love interests that were found in earlier work. It was darker than the Brothers' previous movies, as well.

Duck Soup was directed by Leo McCarey and was Paramount Studio's last release of a Marx Brothers film. It was written by Bert Kalmar and Harry Ruby and contained more of a plot than previous Marx Brother movies, but was highly absurdist and laced with so many skits that the plot was superficial at best.



Comedy actors the Marx Brothers star in the Paramount Pictures production *Duck Soup* in 1933. Pictured are (left to right) Chico Marx, Zeppo Marx, Groucho Marx, and Harpo Marx. (American Stock/Archive Photos/Getty Images)

The movie is based in the fictional country of Freedonia. The country needs money, and the only person that can get it is Mrs. Teasdale (Margaret Dumont), who will only do so if Rufus T. Firefly (Groucho Marx) is made president. The coronation scene is a direct poke at affairs of state. Even the man of honor, Firefly, doesn't take his entrance seriously, arriving late and entering via a fireman's pole. National anthems are not immune from the Marx Brothers' attacks as shown by a musical number that proclaims Firefly will be a tyrant while he plays a fife between verses. This is also where the Ambassador of Sylvania, Trentino (Louis Calhern), rival to Firefly, is introduced. Angered when Firefly is installed, Trentino hires Chicolini (Chico Marx) and Pinky (Harpo Marx) as spies.

The cabinet scene lampoons the running of government as Firefly turns it into little more than monkeyshines over which his Minister of War resigns. Chicolini is hired as secretary of war after passing an inane quiz highlighting the seemingly arbitrary appointment of people to cabinet posts. Diplomacy is mocked as the scenes between the Ambassador and Firefly are shown to be no more than insults and childish posturing. Antiwar sentiment is expressed as war between the two countries is provoked over little more than Firefly and Trentino fighting over Mrs. Teasdale and a simple slap.

The musical scene that follows Freedonia's declaration of war is the only musical number in all of their movies in which all of the Marx Brothers appear at once. The music it is set to is a mixture of a Negro spiritual, patriotic music, and folk music. As the two countries engage in war, the scenes become increasingly absurd. Firefly switches into uniforms from many different eras including the American Civil and Revolutionary Wars, suggesting that the Marx Brothers felt that all war was absurd regardless of cause. Firefly fires on his own troops at one point. Even after Freedonia claims victory, Mrs. Teasdale is pelted with fruit while singing the national anthem, demonstrating that victory is not necessarily winning when war is involved.

Aside from the political satire, there were also scenes of slapstick. The scene with the lemonade vendor (Edgar Kennedy) is a classic hat-switching sequence where the hats of the Pinky and the vendor fall off and the vendor eventually ends up with Chicolini's dunce cap on his head. The mirror scene, although not original to *Duck Soup*, is another example of excellent physical comedy and one of classic scenes of American comedy. While sneaking around Firefly's mansion to steal Freedonia's war plans, Pinky breaks a large mirror while dressed like Firefly. Firefly enters the scene, and not wanting to be caught, Pinky pantomimes Firefly's actions move for move in an artful vaudevillian, silent scene. The act is broken when Chicolini enters the scene dressed as a third Firefly.

The movie did not fare well at the box office. The Depression hurt sales, and there was a general outcry at the time at the lack of respect shown by the Marx Brothers for politics. Later years showed *Duck Soup* for the classic it was, and in 1990, the Library of Congress deemed it "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant" and opted to preserve it in the National Film Registry.

See also: Marx Brothers, The

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—James Heiney

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E.T.: THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL. The story of a marooned alien explorer and the boy named Elliott (Henry Thomas) who befriends him, *E.T.* is one of the most successful movies ever made in the United States. It altered the fortunes of science fiction as a cinematic genre, and of its director, Steven Spielberg. Its title character was unique not only for its alien appearance, but for its role in the film: a being as curious, vulnerable, and occasionally overwhelmed as the human children who become its allies.

Released in June 1982, *E.T.* spent 16 weekends as the top-grossing movie in America, 27 among the top five highest-grossing movies, and 44 among the top ten (Box Office Mojo, 1982). It displaced *Star Wars* (1977) as the highest-grossing movie of all time, a title it held until it was displaced in turn by *Titanic* (1997). *E.T.* remains among the top five highest-grossing movies in history. Its extraordinary success, coupled with that of *Alien* (1979) and the initial *Star Wars* trilogy (1977, 1980, 1983), revived the studios' interest in the science fiction genre, which (with scattered exceptions like *2001: A Space Odyssey* and *Planet of the Apes*) had been moribund since the early 1960s.

E.T. begins and ends in a dark forest “enchanted” by the presence of aliens, and much of what happens between owes more to fantasy than science fiction. Focused squarely on children and told through a child's eyes, it can be read as a fairy tale (“The Frog King”), dressed in science fiction trappings and set in a California suburb rather than a European village (Gordon, 2008). *E.T.*—along with *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981) and his contribution to *Twilight Zone: The Movie* (1983)—made Spielberg's name synonymous with stories where good triumphed handily over evil and the forces of light decisively dispelled those of darkness. It gave Spielberg a reputation for sentimentality—a quality absent from his early thrillers like *Duel* (1971) and *Jaws* (1975)—that he has never entirely lost. The reputation followed him to more serious projects, such as *The Color Purple* (1985), *Schindler's List* (1993), and *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), and led to frequent suggestions that he was ill-suited to direct more adult dramatic pictures such as these.

The sentimentality of *E.T.* made it unique at the time of its release—and nearly so since—among science fiction movies featuring aliens. Two polar-opposite images have



Scene from the 1982 film *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial*, directed by Steven Spielberg. (Photofest)

dominated cinematic portrayals of extraterrestrial visitors to Earth since the early 1950s. One, introduced in *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951) and repeated in films such as *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) and *Contact* (1997), presents aliens as godlike figures: distant, aloof, unknowable, and possessed of powers (whether natural or technological) beyond human comprehension. The other, introduced in *The Thing from Another World* (1951) and repeated in films as varied as *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956), *The Andromeda Strain* (1970), and *Independence Day* (1996), is aliens as malevolent figures: violent, destructive, treacherous, and bent on the extermination or enslavement of humankind. E.T. confounds both sets of expectations. He possesses the ultimate godlike power—resurrection—but is gentle and approachable rather than aloof. He comes in the night, avoids authority figures, and infiltrates Elliott's home and family by stealth and subterfuge, but he is gentle rather than destructive—more frightened than frightening.

The film insists that E.T. is, despite his strange appearance, ultimately like us. The central tension in the film is not between humans and aliens, but between humans who are willing to accept an alien Other into their midst (the children who befriend and shelter E.T.) and those who are not (the scientists who chase and imprison him). Adults' encounters with E.T. function as a kind of litmus test for their true character. Elliott's mother, Mary (Dee Wallace)—initially suspect because her divorce from Elliott's father has left the boy feeling lonely and miserable—shows her true maternal colors when she protects the alien. The leader of the scientists—initially suspect because he is affiliated with them—becomes sympathetic when he confesses to Elliott his own childlike desire to meet and befriend an extraterrestrial.

The idea of aliens as mirrors in which we see our true selves reflected—kindred spirits who, by our treatment of them, show us who we are—has become a recurring theme in a quarter-century of science fiction movies, from *Starman* and *The Brother from Another Planet* (both 1984) to *District 9* (2009). Though well established in print science fiction long before the 1980s, this idea entered the American cinematic lexicon with *E.T.*

See also: Science Fiction Film, The; Spielberg, Steven

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—A. Bowdoin Van Riper

EAST OF EDEN. *East of Eden* (1955) is one of Elia Kazan’s best-known movies of the 1950s; a critical and box-office success that initiated the career of the iconic young actor, James Dean. The film manages to offer a commentary on both the Eisenhower era of the 1950s and the World War I era in which the story was set. Kazan envisioned the film as an anti-Puritan statement against what he saw as the oppressive conservatism of the 1950s.

Previewing the film for teens, Kazan was astonished at their reaction to Dean’s presence on the screen. *East of Eden* struck a nerve in the conformist 1950s, especially among teens, who apparently located their own emotions in Dean’s anguished portrayal of Cal, an unloved, rebellious son. The 1950s was openly criticized as a decade of stifling conformity in such best-selling books as *The Organization Man* and *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*. Oddly, though, it was also the decade of Elvis, Rock ‘n Roll, existentialism, and modern jazz. A lot was boiling beneath the surface, and Dean, like other “method” actors such as Marlon Brando, who also worked in Kazan’s films, was capable of exposing the turbulent feelings of young Americans.

Based on a John Steinbeck novel, *East of Eden* is technically brilliant and beautifully acted. Utilizing both color and wide screen technology for the first time in his career, and working closely with screenwriter Paul Osborn and cinematographer Ted McCord, Kazan created what many critics saw as a unique, modernist film. Employing raked camera angles in certain scenes and adding an offbeat, musical score by Leonard Rosenman—one with odd, contrapuntal melodies, quirky excursions, and an orchestration that was unlike the majority of lush Hollywood scores—Kazan dazzled audiences and critics alike with the look of his film. He was also able to evoke raw, emotional performances from his actors, who provided rapt audiences with a realist

version of natural speech—lines that were mumbled, interrupted, and broken with hesitation—that was still powerfully poetic in its expression.

Kazan focused the film's narrative on the final portion of Steinbeck's novel, highlighting the story of Cal. Clearly inspired by the biblical narrative—Cain is banished to a place "East of Eden" after he kills his brother Abel in the Genesis story—the film depicts an unloving father, Adam (Raymond Massey), a stiff, self-righteous man who dotes on his older son, Aron (Richard Davalos), and his "intended" Abra (perfectly realized by stage actress Julie Harris), and pays little attention to his younger son. Interestingly, the traditionally trained Massey was infuriated by Dean's demands for script changes, profanity on the set, and method-acting-hostility toward his on-screen father. Knowing that Dean was estranged from his own father, Kazan encouraged the mutual hostility between the two actors in order to make the scenes sharper and more persuasive.

In the film, Cal and Aron are told by their father that their mother, Kate (Oscar winner Jo Van Fleet), is dead; but Cal learns that she is actually alive and overseeing a brothel in nearby Monterey. In an attempt to discover who he is and why his father dislikes him so, Cal seeks out his estranged mother, establishing a tenuous relationship with her. When his father loses most of his investment monies on a business venture to ship refrigerated produce by rail, Cal strikes out on his own, backed by a loan from his mother, ultimately making a fortune selling beans to the U.S. military that will be used to feed American soldiers during the war. Trying desperately to earn his father's love, Cal offers him a large monetary birthday gift to replace the monies Adam has lost. Adam, who is overjoyed by the birthday gift that Aron gives him—the revelation that he and Abra are going to be married—rejects Cal's gift, declaring that he won't benefit by way of war profiteering. After Adam suffers a stroke, and is counseled by Abra to let Cal in, there is finally reconciliation between Adam and Cal: Cal will nurse his father as he lives out the rest of his difficult life.

Dean's anguished performance was heralded by critics, who described him as a brilliant and charismatic young actor. Unfortunately, the radiant Dean would die in a tragic car accident in September of 1955, depriving the cinematic world of what would surely have been a stellar acting career.

Many critics regard *East of Eden* as Kazan's finest film, due in no little part to the presence of Dean. Rich in social commentary, skillfully crafted, and with an excellent cast, it remains as startling and contemporary as when it was released in 1955.

See also: Method Acting

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—James Delmont

EASY RIDER. *Easy Rider* appeared in 1969 and had an immediate impact on American cinema and society. Made on a limited budget and shot in an improvisational style, it was a collaborative effort: directed by Dennis Hopper; produced by Peter Fonda; written by Hopper, Fonda, and Terry Southern; and starring Hopper, Fonda, and Jack Nicholson. The film encapsulated the tumultuous counterculture era of the preceding decade, becoming an enormous box-office hit and critical success. Indeed, *Easy Rider* became a cult phenomenon, with mass-produced poster images of Fonda and Hopper, resplendent on their choppers, gracing the walls of thousands who sought to imitate their hip biker personas.

The film opens with a pair of jarringly discordant scenes. The first portrays Wyatt (Fonda)—also known as Captain America—and Billy (Hopper) buying cocaine in a Mexican village. We could be in the world of Sam Peckinpah's *Wild Bunch*; but this Mexico is a businesslike space of mutual exploitation—and oddly nonviolent. From Mexico, the film shifts to a Los Angeles no-man's land, where the cocaine is sold to a rich, white young man (Phil Spector) in a Rolls-Royce. California, dream destination of the Hollywood western, has become a consumer playground, and in *Easy Rider*, the protagonists' point of departure. They cram the plastic-wrapped cash they have received into the gas tanks of their motorcycles and head for New Orleans to enjoy a carnival bacchanal. What follows seems, at first, to be a road movie.

Significantly, Hopper and Fonda envisioned themselves making a modern-day western, with Billy (as in *The Kid*) and Wyatt (as in *Earp*) ranging over America's back roads on two-wheeled, gasoline-powered horses. Although this peculiar vision gave the



Dennis Hopper (left) and Peter Fonda in a scene still from *Easy Rider*, 1969. (Bettmann/Corbis)

film a kind of overarching narrative structure, it did not force *Easy Rider* within traditional linear boundaries. In fact, the picture is really more a series of filmic episodes loosely but effectively strung together. Much of the film's intensity results from the imaginative camera work of cinematographer Laszlo Kovacs and from the powerful performances that Hopper and Fonda were able to draw out of the diverse cast members, many of whom were nonactors. And then there are those cinematic images of rapturous landscapes and unaffected communion among ordinary people, which at their best evoke in us the feeling that we are experiencing a sort of Woody Guthrie-like "This Land is Your Land" pastoral.

The film's pastoral sensibilities are expressed early on in a scene where Captain America repairs his bike at a ranch. He compliments the rancher for "living off the land," bringing to mind a latter-day notion of *Grapes of Wrath* populism. The rancher measures time naturally, by the seasons and crop cycles—in contrast to Captain America who keeps time with a watch, a consumer-culture artifact that he ultimately flings to the ground in disgust. Interestingly, though, we begin to sense something a bit unsettling at this point, as we come to realize that the rancher is strange and that the disturbing cultural distance that exists between him and his Mexican wife seems to violate what we assumed would be a relational idyll.

Billy and Wyatt go on to meet two very different emblematic characters as the film unfolds. One is a hippie-ish commune leader (Luke Askew), who dutifully wipes down Captain America's bike at a filling station as payment for a ride, speaks up in defense of Native Americans, and opines on the need for spiritual awakening. His commune is dressed out in the clichés of flower power, complete with mime troupe; but as with the ranch, it seems almost creepy—in a Charles Manson, Spahn Ranch sort of way—its leader less a wise man than a manipulative hustler. Perhaps, Hopper and Fonda seem to be saying, the American pastoral no longer exists—or maybe it never did.

The second emblematic character Billy and Wyatt encounter is an ACLU lawyer, the black sheep of a leading Southern family. George Hanson—Nicholson in his breakout role—is an alcoholic loser, even if his heart is in the right place. He takes a bold and fateful step, however, by abandoning his old life and joining Billy and Captain America. Ironically, George finds a certain joy in their journey that seems strangely lacking in Billy and Wyatt—indeed, his soliloquy on freedom, with its indictment of those who are afraid to admit they are not free, is more poignant than almost anything Billy and Wyatt have to offer.

Upon reaching New Orleans, Billy and Wyatt wander among thousands of Mardi Gras revelers. These scenes are shot in grainy 16mm, giving them both a realistic and a nightmarish feel. In a particularly powerful scene in a bordello—in which the erotic and the religious are incongruously joined—Captain America comes to understand the debasing nature of prostitution. Realizing that he is complicit in the capitalism he claims to hate, he refuses to become a partner in this most unholy union. After dropping LSD in an old cemetery, he breaks down when long-buried emotions connected to his mother rush to consciousness—an intertextual cinematic moment, it appears, during which character and actor became one, as Fonda has revealed that these scenes were inspired by his own feelings about his mother's suicide.

Given how thoroughly audiences embraced *Easy Rider*, its unrelentingly tragic ending is striking. Unredeemed, Captain America must admit that “We blew it”—their journey, based as it was on ill-gotten gains, has been a waste. George is beaten to death, while Billy and Wyatt are literally blown from their bikes by shotgun blasts fired by good old boys in a pickup truck—dying, then, on the American back roads that seemed to hold so much promise. In the film’s last sequence, the camera swoops up and away from the horrible scene on the road, revealing a majestic river that continues to flow despite all that has happened.

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—Dimitri Keramitas

ERIN BROCKOVICH. *Erin Brockovich*, released in 2000 and based on a true story, seeks to demonstrate the significance of environmental damage and its effect on local residents as well as the means by which ordinary citizens can challenge industries that have produced those harmful effects. In some ways, it could be regarded as an updating of *Mr. Smith goes to Washington*. Instead of a gullible politician taking on the political establishment, however, it is a plucky and passionate paralegal who leads the fight against a large corporation whose environmental disregard leads to grievous harm for neighboring residents.

Directed by Steven Soderbergh, who, at the time, was best known for producing the original and provocative picture *Sex, Lies and Videotape*, the film follows the struggles of the eponymous title character, played by Julia Roberts, who won the Best Actress Academy Award for her performance. The film opens with Brockovich, an unemployed single mother of three, searching for a job. While she is conducting her search, she is injured when her dilapidated car is smashed into by a runaway Jaguar. She goes to court seeking damages but loses the case—some suggest that her skimpy outfits, rough language, and revelations about her failed marriages make her less than a sympathetic character with the jury.

Brockovich finagles her way into a job with the law firm that had unsuccessfully argued her case, and while working through what seems to be little more than routine paperwork, she discovers information indicating that an inordinate number of peculiar illnesses have been suffered by the firm’s clients in Hinckley, California. Convinced that something is amiss, Brockovich doggedly works to expose a plot by the Pacific Gas & Electric Company to hide the fact that it has been dumping harmful chemicals into the ground around its plant in Hinckley.



Albert Finney and Julia Roberts in a scene from the film *Erin Brockovich*, which won Roberts an Oscar for Best Actress in 2001. (AFP/Getty Images)

Brockovich invests herself emotionally in the case and will not let the firm's legal team turn aside from the matter. Ed Masry (Albert Finney), the lead attorney and Erin's boss and father figure, is often the voice of rational analysis—he is not sure it is worthwhile proceeding with the case. In the end, however, he is moved by Brockovich's passion and agrees to support her. Brockovich comes to know the residents of Hinckley, and they come to trust her. Her commonsense touch and empathy are somewhat simplistically contrasted with the cold reason of the high-powered attorneys. In addition to examining the issue of powerless citizens confronting powerful corporations, the film also explores the problem of class-based prejudice—some individuals in a position to help, such as certain personal injury attorneys, are often inhibited from doing their best because of their own prejudices.

The lawyers who are assigned to the case advise binding arbitration rather than a jury trial. Although she very much wants her clients to have their day in court, Brockovich comes to understand that the strategy is the most prudent one to pursue. There are no dramatic courtroom scenes, then, as the real case involved the examination of reams of technical data and the eventual disclosure that Pacific Gas & Electric Company officials knew full well that the plant was dumping dangerous chemicals in the areas around Hinckley. In the end, there is no rousing, redemptive moment when the jury comes back with a guilty verdict; due to the perseverance of Brockovich, however, the case is decided in favor of the Hinckley residents.

Significantly, the film encouraged other firms to put together class-action lawsuits alleging that other companies had been guilty of environmental damage—a result that

not all believed was positive. While fear of lawsuits may have led potential polluters to resist the temptation to save money by dumping their toxic waste instead of disposing of it properly, it has been suggested that unscrupulous attorneys have made billions by way of class-action suits that have helped their vast numbers of clients very little. In regard to the film itself, while audiences loved it, some critics argued that it oversimplified the science and painted too simple a picture of corporate heads as faceless, nameless robber barons with no regard for anyone but themselves. A. O. Scott, for instance, a reviewer for the *New York Times*, characterized the film as being filled with clichés and suggested that Roberts's portrayal of Brockovich provided viewers with little more than a heavy dose of "moral vanity and phony populism."

See also: Women in Film; Male Gaze, The

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—Michael L. Coulter

EXORCIST, THE. During the 1960s, various events—including the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, the seemingly interminable Vietnam War, and an increasingly bloody civil rights movement—shattered America's optimistic political and social climate. Amidst the nation's rapidly rising fears, the release of George A. Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* and Roman Polanski's *Rosemary's Baby* in 1968 ushered in the modern era of the horror film (Waller, 1987). Prior to the release of these seminal works, horror films had generally been set in another time and place—usually in the past and/or in remote locales. By contrast, Romero and Polanski brought terror into our everyday lives by setting their tales in contemporary America (Waller, 1987). *The Exorcist*, in a profoundly disturbing way, continued this unsettling trend.

By the time *The Exorcist* was released in 1973, the nation's confidence in the American Dream—peaceful, prosperous lives centered on nuclear families—had eroded. A sequence of events that had begun five years earlier suggested that the United States was becoming increasingly violent. In March 1968, American troops brutally massacred hundreds of Vietnamese citizens at My Lai, a widely publicized atrocity that appalled and angered many. Only one month later, pacifist civil rights movement leader Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. Since King's faith, grace, charisma, and influence had helped calm an intermittently violent movement, his murder was both symbolic and a turning point.

After King's death, race riots erupted across the United States while millions of anti-war protesters took to the streets. The general climate intensified when, in May 1970,



The silhouette of Father Merrin outside the McNeil home in a still from the film *The Exorcist*, directed by William Friedkin, 1973. (Warner Bros./Getty Images)

members of the Ohio National Guard shot and killed four student antiwar protesters at Kent State University. Campuses across the country erupted in response. Young people seemed to be dangerously out of control; the free-spirited hippies who had reveled in peace, love, and happiness at Woodstock in August 1969 appeared to have morphed into violent rebels. For many, the stabbing death of African American Meredith Hunter at the Altamont Speedway Free Festival only four months later, in December 1969, set the tone for 1970s America. Even the sacrosanct office of the U.S. president was under attack as the Watergate scandal raged; only seven months after the release of *The Exorcist*, Nixon, facing impeachment, became the first president to resign.

In early 1970, widely publicized details about the 1969 Manson Family murders contributed to Americans' growing sense of unease and bewilderment. Cult leader Charles Manson had directed his followers to carry out two sets of brutal killings in Los Angeles. Their goal was to instigate what Manson called "Helter Skelter," an inevitable apocalyptic war Manson believed would be precipitated by growing racial tensions in the United States. The Family members who committed the murders were in their late teens and early twenties, and the connection Manson made between his cult's beliefs and various songs on the Beatles' *White Album* exacerbated Americans' distrust of an increasingly rebellious youth culture.

Moreover, the Manson Family, headed by father figure Manson, made a macabre parody of the American family and symbolized its breakdown. During a time of social violence and political deceit, not even family life could provide Americans a sense of security. Divorce was on the rise; throughout the United States, single-parent households became more common. Also, after the Civil Rights Act of 1964 forbade gender discrimination, women had begun joining the work force in increasing numbers. Many Americans questioned whether this change was positive and speculated about its impact on social stability. Adding to the turmoil, women joined together—on the streets and in the name of a sisterhood of solidarity—to create a liberation movement that grew exponentially in the early 1970s. Americans connected youthful rebellion to lax parenting, which inevitably led to the breakdown of the nuclear family and women's increasing independence. *The Exorcist* reflected their concerns.

The film's main character is a 12-year-old named Regan (Linda Blair), whose single mother works as an actress. Left alone to entertain herself, Regan contacts and befriends a demon by way of what is ostensibly a child's toy: a Ouija board. As her mental and physical states deteriorate, medical doctors and psychiatrists fail to find a cause, much less a cure, for her illness. In a remedy suggestive of the pro-nuclear family sentiment of the day, Regan's nonreligious mother asks a Catholic priest, Father Damien Karras, to help her family by exorcising the demon (Phillips, 2005).

This process is a difficult one, in part because Karras fears he is losing his own faith. In a scene that conflates youth culture, decadence, and evil, he expresses his concern to a fellow priest at a bar while the Allman Brothers Band's song "Ramblin' Man" plays loudly in the background. Significantly, Father Lankester Merrin, the senior priest the Catholic Church asks to assist with the exorcism, is in Woodstock writing a book when he receives word about the possession. He reads the letter from the Church while walking slowly through a forest; the subtle message is that Merrin will return from bucolic, pre-Altamont times to restore order to contemporary America by casting evil from young Regan.

In the meantime, Karras is experiencing problems caused by the breakdown of his own family. His mother, who lives alone with only a radio to keep her company, is ill with an injured foot. If her nuclear family unit were intact, she would be cared for; in actuality, however, her brother visits infrequently and eventually commits her to a psychiatric hospital so she can receive the medical care neither he nor her son can provide. Eventually Karras's mother does return home; but she dies, broken and alone—her body lying undiscovered for a number of days.

The demon uses Regan's possession to provoke Karras about his mother's death. When Karras first visits the teen, the demon claims it has his mother, and that its goal is to unite the priest with "us." It accuses Karras of leaving his mother alone to die and claims she will never forgive him. Later, it plays tricks on him by adopting the physical guise of his mother and, speaking in her voice, asking him why he treated her poorly. Father Merrin cautions Karras to beware the demon's mixing of lies and truth. For viewers in 1970s America, this warning recalled President Nixon's comments about the American media as it probed the breaking story of Watergate (Cull, 2000).

Near the end of the exorcism, Karras determines that the strain of possession is causing Regan's heart to fail. The situation worsens when the elderly Merrin dies during the rite. When the demon giggles about his death, Karras physically attacks Regan's body. He angrily instructs the demon to leave her and to take possession of him instead. Once it does, he struggles not to kill Regan, finally meeting his demise after jumping out the girl's bedroom window. Karras's sacrifice saves Regan's life and her family.

The Exorcist does not present Regan as an entirely passive victim. Significantly, her name is an allusion to a thankless child in Shakespeare's *King Lear* (Cull, 2000, 48). During a time of seemingly uncontrollable youths, *The Exorcist* depicts that quintessential teenage haven—the bedroom—as a source of evil. The film presents shots of Regan's closed door before revealing each round of hideous atrocities within the room (Kermode 2005, 42): the girl swears, strikes her mother, vomits on a priest, and masturbates fervently with a crucifix.

Violence perpetrated by university students inspired a key scene in *The Exorcist* (Cull, 2000). Regan's mother, Chris, is shown acting in a film that portrays dissent at Georgetown University. While in character, she implores students to work "within the system." Ironically, the film places the "real" Chris outside the system by suggesting she invited evil into her home because she is not a full-time mother.

As Americans debated motherhood, female bodies became a source of anxiety. Wide availability of birth control pills beginning in 1960, followed by the *Roe v. Wade* decision to legalize abortion in January 1973, meant women could choose their reproductive futures—and therefore their destinies—for the first time in history. At a time when many Americans questioned this newly acquired freedom, *The Exorcist* showcased a frightening female body beyond control (Cull, 2000); Regan even defies natural order by rotating her head 360 degrees.

When William Peter Blatty wrote the eponymous book on which *The Exorcist* is based, he fictionalized the 1949 account of a 14-year-old Maryland boy's exorcism. Blatty's decision to change the possessed from a teenage boy to a female on the cusp of womanhood complimented issues current in 1970s America. That Blatty set the story in Georgetown, just outside Washington, D.C., strengthens the film's political and social statements (Cull, 2000, 49). *The Exorcist* equates the evils of the modern world with Satan and, therefore, presents religion and traditional morality as their sole antidote (Kinder and Houston, 1987). Although Blatty intended this conservative message to be the film's focus, director William Friedkin packed *The Exorcist* with terror-inducing delights that kindled audiences' love of the horror genre (Phillips, 2005). Arguably, in 1973 Americans were poised to be scared.

See also: Horror Film, The

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—Joyce M. Youmans

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FAHRENHEIT 451. Throughout history, book burning has been used to eradicate particular ideas. In the science fiction film *Fahrenheit 451* (1966), directed by François Truffaut and starring Oskar Werner and Julie Christie, book burning serves a more far-reaching goal, the elimination of individual thought. Based on Ray Bradbury's novel of the same name (1953), *Fahrenheit 451* shares with George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) a critique of authoritarianism and censorship. In both tales, censorship and propaganda are used to control the populace. But in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, they support a totalitarian state; while in *Fahrenheit 451* censorship begins with the majority, which has lost its desire for books.

The protagonist is Guy Montag, a "fireman." In this future dystopia, firemen don't put out fires. They burn books. But Montag undergoes a change of heart. One day he meets a young woman on a train who asks why he burns books, if he's happy, and if he ever reads the books he burns. The next day, he hides a book and brings it home to read. This little act of defiance grows into an obsession, apparently triggered by another event. Montag's unit is called to burn books at the house of an old woman, where they find an immense library. They are ordered to burn down the whole house, but the woman refuses to leave, instead, choosing to burn with her books.

At home, Montag lashes out, telling his TV-obsessed wife and her friends, "You're nothing but zombies, all of you. Just like those husbands of yours you don't even know anymore. You're not living, you're just killing time!" Turning off the TV, he insists they listen to him read. And as he reads a passage about a man whose wife is dying, one woman cries, "I can't bear to know those feelings. I'd forgotten all about those things." The more Montag awakens from his stupor, the more he sees how numb and lifeless people are. But in books he finds truth, meaning, and remembrance.

Book burning, in this story, is about more than books. As the books are burned, so are the thoughts, feelings, and histories they contain. As people reject books, they reject thinking and accept distractions like propaganda, drugs, and games. The burning is a metaphor for the myriad ways people conform rather than think, and the ways individuality and meaning are lost. In this world, people are hedonists whose only goals are pleasure and happiness. Conflict is anathema to this, so they eliminate it by

burning difference away. With their differing views, books are the enemies of peace. The chief explains, “We’ve all got to be alike. The only way to be happy is for everyone to be made equal. So, we burn the books.” But the result is a false happiness, underlaid with fear, anger, and rage.

As Montag begins to think for himself, he starts to see the monotony that surrounds him and the dull, lifeless character of his relationships. But he remains unaware, as yet, of the rage he feels within. What is missing most of all in this world is remembrance. Without books, no one remembers the past, or even what happened yesterday. Neither Montag nor his wife remembers where or when they met. But in books, Montag finds a way out of the lackluster, alienated life he shares with others in his society. This is visualized in the film through dull, languid expressions and a monotony of sameness, like the rows of invariable gray coats at the school.

Back at work, Montag attempts to resign. But he is asked to stay for one more call. When they arrive at the house, he realizes it is his own, and that Linda has turned him in and packed her bags. When the chief asks Montag to do the honors, he takes the torch and burns his bed. He burns his TV. And then he burns his books. Finally, in a release of pent up rage he hardly seems aware of, he burns the chief, an act both symbolic and real. Afterwards, he escapes, and joins a group of homeless dissidents called “the Book People.” They memorize books, and then burn them to avoid arrest. Later, the books are passed on to the next generation, as the Book People lie in wait for the day when books, and the things they represent, are once again desired.

See also: Science Fiction Film, *The*; Truffaut, François

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—Susan de Gaia

FAIL-SAFE. The United States dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, the Soviet Union successfully tested its own bombs in 1949, and within a few years the Cold War rivals possessed nuclear arsenals that could destroy the planet many times over. It was not until the late 1950s and 1960s, however, that Hollywood produced its most significant films dealing with nuclear holocaust and the U.S.-Soviet arms race. From the end of World War II through Joseph McCarthy’s political witch hunts of the early to mid-1950s and the launching of the Soviet satellite *Sputnik* in the late 1950s, fears of Soviet domination seemed to make the topics too inflammatory. In Hollywood, of course, McCarthy-era blacklists also discouraged the making of films based on such controversial themes. Filmmakers tended to try to lighten things up with screwball comedies like *The Atomic Kid* (1954), or to sublimate fears of communism in paranoid sci-fi thrillers about alien attacks on the United States, most famously in *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956). But then, in 1959, *On the Beach*

launched a half-decade period during which several of the most enduring films about nuclear anxiety were released, culminating in 1964 with two of the best-known Cold War pictures, the absurdist classic *Dr. Strangelove* and the tense drama *Fail-Safe*.

While the penetrating black humor of *Dr. Strangelove* often leaves viewers concluding that a satirical approach is the only fruitful way of dealing with Cold War nuclear confrontation, Sidney Lumet's straight, serious counterpart was innovative and illuminating in ways that are perhaps difficult to imagine almost a half-century later. In the film, written by blacklisted screenwriter Walter Bernstein, a mechanical glitch in mainframe computers at Omaha Strategic Air Command generates erroneous orders for an Alaska-based Air Force squadron to drop two 20-megaton nuclear bombs on Moscow. Communications fail, and the planes quickly surpass "fail safe," the point at which they cannot be called back through normal protocols. The film then builds suspense as a drama of human improvisation during a crisis created by machines, with characters' behavior conditioned by years of Cold War political and military training.

Fail-Safe contributed to the demystification of the U.S. national security state simply by imagining people interacting in top-secret settings like Omaha SAC, the presidential bunker, and the Pentagon. Scenes in the Pentagon "war room" frame the discussion about what to do as a debate about the lessons of World War II. When dovish Gen. Warren Black (Dan O'Herlihy) proposes that the United States must do everything it possibly can to abort the mission or shoot down the planes, civilian adviser Professor Groeteschele (Walter Matthau) disagrees and argues that the bombing should be carried out because the Russians will surrender after Moscow is destroyed. When he is told, "We don't go in for sneak attacks, we had that done to us at Pearl Harbor," he argues that Pearl Harbor was justified and that the Japanese blundered by not attacking harder, adding, "They paid for that mistake at Hiroshima." Matthau's character is based on political scientist Herman Kahn, whose best-selling 1960 book *On Thermonuclear War* argued that nuclear war was winnable and survivable. *Fail-Safe's* overzealous Cold Warrior is a Jew who says he learned from the Nazis the importance of striking first, but he is alone in recommending the bombing of Moscow.

If Groeteschele is *Fail-Safe's* post-traumatic madman, its paragon of sensitivity and diplomacy is the nameless American president (Henry Fonda), who communicates with the Soviet premier through young translator Buck (Larry Hagman) on an iconic Cold War crisis telephone. The men's intelligent, emotionally realistic negotiations and their militaries' attempt to work together to end the standoff amounted to a humanist counter-fantasy for a nation long taught to think of Soviet leaders as monsters. To modern viewers, *Fail-Safe's* war room graphics may look like a primitive video game, and the film may seem grandiose and humorless. Understood in its historical context, however, it directly confronted a topic that had been avoided or trivialized for years by dramatizing a crisis made no less plausible by the disclaimer in the end credits in which the U.S. military reports, "a rigidly enforced system of safeguards insure that occurrences such as those depicted in this story cannot happen."

See also: War Film, The

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—Kenneth F. Maffitt

FALLING DOWN. Joel Schumacher's *Falling Down* (1993) follows the story of a laid-off middle-class white male named William Foster (Michael Douglas), who is known throughout the film mainly by the name on his vanity license plate: D-FENS. Foster was formerly an engineer who developed nuclear missiles, and as the film begins, he is stewing in a hellish Los Angeles traffic jam. In a masterful sequence directly inspired by the opening of Federico Fellini's *8½*, D-FENS sits in bumper-to-bumper traffic that is completely immobile. The heat is stifling, the air conditioner and the driver-side window handle are broken, and a fly consistently bites Foster while evading his attempts to kill it. Outside of the car, horns are blaring, lights on a construction sign flash incessantly in his face, and the surrounding bumper stickers proclaim messages of Christian sacrifice, economic liberation, and confrontation. The faces around him are devoid of all but negative expressions, and they seem to be staring at him: a "Garfield" window stick-on with a toothy grin, the weary man whom D-FENS can see in his rearview mirror, a woman putting on lipstick and watching D-FENS through *her* rearview mirror, the deadened expression of a student on the bus next to him. And finally, the little girl directly in front of him, holding a doll and staring at him with a totally blank expression. She is about the same age as his own daughter, Adele (Joey Hope Singer), and a particularly painful reminder that he has not been invited to her birthday celebration, which is scheduled to occur later on during this momentous day.

All of these forces assail D-FENS as he boils away in his little car; but rather than floating away like Fellini's Guido, D-FENS makes the ill-fated decision to abandon his car, telling the stunned driver behind him only that "I'm going home." As he walks toward what we assume to be his Venice Beach residence, he makes his way through some of the worst neighborhoods in Los Angeles, encountering all manner of what he concludes are depraved and morally bankrupt individuals. His antagonists, xenophobically depicted as ethnic caricatures that exist, it seems, only because the rage of D-FENS must have some sort of rationale, represent the "melting pot" of a dystopic Los Angeles, and he metes out violent justice to each of them with the various weapons he acquires during his journey. Eventually we come to understand that there may be something seriously wrong with D-FENS's sense of reality; most notably, that he and his wife Beth (Barbara Hershey) are divorced and that he no longer resides with her and his daughter in Venice Beach. Indeed, Beth has a restraining order against her former husband. In the end, he must be stopped by a policeman on his last day of work, Lt. Prendergast (Robert Duvall), who, ironically, seems to be the only person in Los Angeles who can identify with the raging D-FENS.

Interestingly, Schumacher and screenwriter Ebbe Roe Smith were developing *Falling Down* as Los Angeles was ripped apart by the 1992 L.A. riots that exploded after a jury acquitted four police officers in the beating of Rodney King. The film, it seems, captured the angst-filled zeitgeist of 1990s urban America, with its tragic antihero, portrayed brilliantly by Douglas, evoking in audiences fear, rage, and ultimately pity: "You mean I'm the bad guy?," asks a disillusioned Foster when confronted by Prendergast. Yet, even in a film that exploited the frustrations and anxieties of ordinary Americans, and provided an unlikely vigilante to respond to them, the status quo of the existing social order is reaffirmed: Foster's vigilante is dispatched, and Prendergast decides to continue on as a policeman. The film, if understood as a cautionary tale and not merely as a rationalization for the marginalization of ethnic Others, is a successful attempt to categorize the anxieties of the early 1990s, providing the audience with a cathartic story that purges violent impulses through an everyman figure for whom they could cheer.

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—James M. Brandon

FARGO. *Fargo* (1996), written, produced and directed by Joel and Ethan Coen, is at once a rural deconstruction of traditional film noir pictures, an "American Gothic" comedy of errors, and a symbolic allegory pitting the agents of creation and life against those of entropy and death. It is also an homage to all things Minnesotan, as evidenced by the numerous location shots throughout the film and even a veiled tribute to Minneapolis music legend Prince, whose symbol is seen turned on its side in the credits. *Fargo* also owes much to the 1967 Richard Brooks true-crime film *In Cold Blood*, going so far as to claim—falsely, it turns out—that the events in *Fargo* were based on real events that occurred in Minnesota. If the Brooks film was reality presented as fiction, then the Coen Brothers offering may be understood as a fictitious expression of reality as fiction.

Like a negative image of classic film noir, *Fargo* is set in a vast whiteness. The snowy landscape of the Northern Plains stretches toward the horizon along grey roads and fence lines as far as the eye can see. Unlike the urban noir detective movie, where mystery is expressed by the chiaroscuro of dim streetlights against claustrophobic darkness, here clarity is obscured by too much whiteness, by snow blindness, by the glaring candor of evil committed in the light of day and by the slow fade to a white screen.

The movie opens with a scene in which strapped-for-cash car salesman Jerry Lundegaard (William H. Macy) meets with kidnappers-for-hire Carl Showalter (Steve Buscemi) and the pale and mysteriously taciturn Gaear Grimsrud (Peter Stormare). Lundegaard is there to work out the details of a plot to kidnap his wife and to extort



Scene from the 1996 film *Fargo*, directed by Joel and Ethan Coen and starring Frances McDormand, shown here kneeling over a dead body. (Photofest)

ransom money from his wealthy but antagonistic father-in-law. An hour late for the meeting and derisively chastised for his infraction by Showalter, Lundegaard nervously excuses himself, repeating the prophetic line, “Well, that was a mistake, then.” As the story unfolds, mistake builds upon mistake as the conspiratorial scheme devolves from a relatively benign hoax into a surreal pastiche of horrific murders.

Standing over against the darkly humorous, conniving criminals Showalter, Grimsrud, and, in a different way, Lundegaard, is the small-town sheriff of Brainerd, Minnesota, Marge Gunderson, played by Frances McDormand—Joel Coen’s wife—in a role that earned her the Best Actress Academy Award. Marge personifies Good. She is honest, noble, diligent, trusting and trustworthy; and she is pregnant, a constant reminder that Marge is the calm, life-bearing antithesis to the chaotic, abyssal Lundegaard, Showalter, and Grimsrud. She carries life, the appreciation of life, and the promise of life within her, even as she confronts situations that are beyond her understanding. In one of the most poignant scenes in the film, Sheriff Gunderson speaks to one of the murderers as he rides in the back seat of her patrol car after she has arrested him:

So that was Mrs. Lundegaard on the floor in there. And I guess that was your accomplice in the wood chipper . . . and those three people in Brainerd. And for what? For a little bit of money. There’s more to life than a little money, you know. . . . Don’tcha know that? And here ya are, and it’s a beautiful day. Well . . . I just don’t understand it.

In the end, that Marge does not understand—that she can never understand—is the very thing that makes her a redemptive character. The positive universal force with

which Marge is infused radiates out from her, even in the midst of all of that evil that surrounds her. Nowhere is this more movingly expressed than in the scenes between Marge and her husband Norm. As the film draws to a close, Marge, cleansed of the filth and degradation that she has touched up against in her role as sheriff, snuggles with Norm in their bed, safe and warm against the Minnesota cold. A wildlife painter, Norm shares with Marge the bittersweet moment of finding out that one of his images has been chosen to appear on a postage stamp, although not on the most expensive one. Pleased, yet disappointed that he is again second best, he turns to Marge for reassurance:

Norm: “People don’t much use the three-cent.”

Marge: “Oh for Pete’s sake, of course they do! Whenever they raise the postage, people need the little stamp . . . when they’re stuck with the old ones.”

The film ends with Marge—now as wife and mother—in the arms of her husband making small talk, both looking forward to the end of winter and the birth of their child in the spring. Ever nurturing, Marge soothes away the memory of incomprehensible evil by celebrating the importance of small stamps and small dreams—the extraordinary things of our wonderfully ordinary lives.

See also: Coen, Joel and Ethan; Film Noir

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—Helen M. York

FAST TIMES AT RIDGEMONT HIGH. A filmic representative of 1980s teen life, *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* (1982) was declared by the American Film Institute one of “America’s Funniest Movies”; it was added to the National Film Registry in 2005. The picture was adapted for the screen from Cameron Crowe’s book *Fast Times at Ridgemont High: A True Story*, an account of Crowe’s experiences when he went “undercover” at a San Diego high school while working as a reporter for *Rolling Stone*. Teaming with Crowe, director Amy Heckerling crafted a disturbingly realistic film that explored the confusing world of American teens as they attempt to negotiate their way through the minefield of adolescence.

The film follows a dizzying array of characters that populate a fictional Southern California high school. At the heart of *Fast Times*, however, are the stories of Stacy Hamilton (Jennifer Jason Leigh) and Mark Ratner (Brian Backer). These two innocent



Scene from the 1982 film *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, directed by Amy Heckerling and starring Sean Penn as Jeff Spicoli, shown here with Ray Walston, playing the part of teacher Mr. Hand. (Photofest)

idealists are guided through the trials and tribulations of high school romance by their more experienced friends, Linda Barrett (Phoebe Cates) and Mike Damone (Robert Romanus). Unfortunately, their ongoing attempts to establish a romantic relationship suffer from bad timing, differing levels of sexual maturity, and betrayal.

While the narrative flow of the film revolves around the experiences of Stacy and Mark, the picture's most notable character may be Jeff Spicoli, the stoner/surfer played brilliantly by Sean Penn. Penn developed an endearing caricature of the quintessential class clown who wants nothing more than to enjoy his high school years by doing as little as possible. Creative, insubordinate, and full of life, Spicoli's ability to coast through the educational system without learning a thing is put to the test by Mr. Hand (Ray Walston), an eccentric history teacher who engages in a humorous, if lopsided, intellectual tug-of-war with the young burnout. Walston shines as the rigid arbiter of knowledge, and his reactions to Spicoli's various provocations, such as having a pizza delivered to Mr. Hand's classroom, show him to be the young man's better in this crucial game of life.

While there are many unforgettable scenes in *Fast Times*, perhaps the most memorable is one involving the masturbatory fantasy of Stacy's brother Brad (Judge Reinhold). Helplessly desirous of the ethereal Linda (Phoebe Cates), Brad indulges himself in his bathroom while imagining his dream girl slithering out of his swimming pool and walking toward him in slow motion while she seductively removes the top of

her bright red bikini. Set to the sounds of “Moving in Stereo” by the Cars, the fantasy ends in jarring fashion when the real-life Linda bursts into the unlocked bathroom, discovering Brad in the act. Frequently parodied in other films and on television shows, the scene is often mentioned by radio DJs when they play the Cars’ “Moving in Stereo,” just one of the hit songs that appears on the film’s popular soundtrack, which features music from artists such as the Go-Go’s, Oingo Boingo, Jackson Browne, and Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers.

Significantly, Amy Heckerling would go on to make *Clueless* (1995) and *Loser* (2000) and Cameron Crowe *Almost Famous* (2000), solidifying their places as pop-culture anthropologists who have been able to give expression to the tortured world of teenage angst and redemption in profound and entertaining ways. Perhaps unexpectedly, *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* became for Generation X audiences what George Lucas’s *American Graffiti* (1973) became for baby boomers: a nostalgic coming-of-age picture that expertly captured the spirit of the times for suburban teens.

See also: Coming-of-Age Film, The

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—James M. Brandon

FATAL ATTRACTION. Released in 1987, *Fatal Attraction* concerns a married man—a devoted husband and father—who has a weekend fling with a business associate while his wife and daughter are out of town; when he seeks to end the affair, the woman relentlessly pursues him. A box-office hit that garnered six Academy Award nominations, the film proved extremely controversial, generating wide-ranging and often vitriolic discussions about misogyny, gender roles, stalking, and fidelity.

Alex Forrest—played against type by Glenn Close, who transformed her big-screen persona from devoted wife/mother into sultry seductress—becomes obsessed with Dan Gallagher (Michael Douglas) after their illicit weekend. She calls him repeatedly and even insinuates herself into Dan’s familial space by talking her way into his house—returning home from work one evening, Dan is shocked to find Alex casually chatting with his unsuspecting wife, Beth (Anne Archer). As her obsession escalates, she spies on the family, threatens to expose Dan, and finally breaks into the Gallagher house and kills the family’s pet rabbit by boiling it in a large pot. As the film draws to an increasingly intense conclusion, Alex takes Beth and her daughter prisoner in their own home. Violently attacking Beth, Alex is finally killed by the aggrieved wife. Interestingly, early versions of the script called for Alex to kill herself at the end of the film; but audience



Scene from the 1987 film *Fatal Attraction*, directed by Adrian Lyne and starring Glenn Close and Michael Douglas. (Photofest)

responses to a prescreening of the picture with that ending were largely negative—viewers, it seems, felt that Beth should have her revenge.

Although critics pointed out the obvious similarities between *Fatal Attraction* and Clint Eastwood's 1971 offering *Play Misty for Me*—most suggested that Eastwood had done it better—audiences flocked to theaters to see the 1987 picture and it became the second-highest-grossing film of the year. Reactions to *Fatal Attraction* from film scholars, especially feminist scholars, were not as favorable, however. Many argued that the film was explicitly misogynistic, implying that Dan had been lured into the situation by the wily Alex. When he repents of his sins—evidently absolved—he is mercilessly put upon by an increasingly psychotic force. Further, the family structure that Dan had helped to shake appeared to be threatened only by the unbalanced Alex; and Beth, who should quite naturally be outraged by her husband's behavior, supportively welcomes him back into the fold and ultimately defends him with her life.

Ironically, some feminist critics saw something quite different in the character of Alex: instead of reading her as just another filmic stereotype of a crazed woman who is used and discarded by another irresponsible man, they saw her as a strong and independent figure standing firm against patriarchal oppression. This latter interpretation of Alex seems problematic in its own way, suggesting as it does that female strength

and independence can only be expressed by way of hysterical behavior. Equally troubling was the reaction of many men, who appeared to see nothing wrong with the way Dan's behavior was characterized in the film but saw him as a cautionary figure meant to warn them about the dangers of unscrupulous women lurking around every corner—make one little mistake, and you could lose everything you worked so hard to accomplish!

See also: Male Gaze, The; Women in Film

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—Michael Faubion

FERRIS BUELLER'S DAY OFF. Released in June 1986, *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* was an enormous hit for Paramount Studios and writer/director John Hughes, taking in roughly \$70 million at the box office, as well as launching the career of star Matthew Broderick. The film marked the end of a spectacular streak of creativity for Hughes, who, between 1984 and 1986, directed a string of era-defining teen films, including *Sixteen Candles* (1984), *The Breakfast Club* (1985), *Weird Science* (1985), and *Pretty in Pink* (1986).

The film opens with scenes of high school junior Ferris Bueller (Broderick) lying in bed and pretending to be sick while trying to convince his parents (Cindy Pickett and Lyman Ward) that he should stay home from school. Ferris's sister, Jeanie (Jennifer Grey), annoyed by her brother's charmingly manipulative ways—and the fact that he gets away with everything—sets out to derail his scheme. Ferris once again gets his way, however, and after a number of establishing shots of the beautiful spring day that awaits, puts the case to the audience: "How can I possibly be expected to handle school on a day like this?"

The adventure begins with Ferris coaxing his hypochondriac friend Cameron Frye (Alan Ruck) to drive over to Ferris's house—you got the car, reasons Ferris, I only got a computer. Meanwhile, Ferris's nemesis, Dean of Students Edward R. Rooney (Jeffrey Jones), realizing that his wayward charge is not coming to school, hatches a plan to "put one hell of a dent" in the young Bueller's future by catching him in his tenth act of truancy. Ferris's plan to include girlfriend Sloane (Mia Sara) in his day-off high jinks, hits a snag, forcing Ferris and Cameron to steal the prized possession of Cameron's father, a mint-condition, 1961 red Ferrari—which, it seems, means more to the senior Frye than does his own son. With Chicago as the backdrop and the pounding rhythms of an eclectic soundtrack, featuring the likes of Yello and Sigue Sigue Sputnik, driving them along, Ferris and Sloane set off to show Cameron "a good time."



Scene from the 1986 film *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, directed by John Hughes and starring Matthew Broderick. (Photofest)

Significantly, one could point to any of Hughes's films that appeared in the mid-1980s as exemplary of the era's dystopic Reagan-era zeitgeist; all are characterized by representations of absentee parents, the obsession with aesthetic superficiality, male pubescent fantasy, dialogue inflected by pop culture references, and the division of high school students into caste categories such as the "jock," the "geek," the "criminal," and the "prom queen." The teenagers in these films—most of whom feel abandoned by their own families—turn to each other in order to forge surrogate families that they hope will keep them safe and secure. Such is the case with mother and father figures Ferris and Sloane, who offer guidance and tough love to their overly introspective and anxious "son" Cameron. Interestingly, however, although the trio's jaunt through the city of Chicago defines an act of measured rebellion, at the end of their adventure, Ferris and Cameron still take comfort in returning home—*Pretty in Pink* makes a similar case for the comfort of home—where their parents maintain a sense of ethical authority and well-being.

Although the film plays out on its surface as a teen comedy—the rascal Ferris involved in his cat-and-mouse game with his nemesis Rooney, and by extension, with his sister—on a deeper level, the film may be read, like all of Hughes's best pictures—as a moving, and often tender, character study. The relationship between Ferris—a sort of latter-day, charismatic, big-hearted rebel without a cause—and Cameron is particularly affecting. Cameron—anxious and disillusioned by being cut adrift from his family, and especially his father, in the midst of the consumer culture of the 1980s—appears to have nothing more than his relationship with Ferris. Interestingly, Ferris attempts to overturn Cameron's existential torpor by guiding his friend through a

veritable tour of '80s material excess—the greed of the Chicago Trade Mart; the arrogance of the Sears tower; the child's game played by high-priced professional athletes; the fancy eatery (Chez Quis). Some have suggested that the rebellious activities of this film's characters represent an act of play that “constitute[s] training for success in a bureaucratized, corporatized, high-tech society” (Traube, 1989)—so prized in Reagan's 1980s America. But this seems to miss the largely anticorporate, profamily sensibilities that mark *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*. Although it is certainly emblematic of 1980s films—Hughes's offerings included—that explore the alienation and anguish of the decade's struggles with issues of class and status, it may be argued that *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* defines a reimagining of sorts for the notion of teenage rebellion, as here the seemingly dispossessed teenagers ultimately return to the comfort of their own homes.

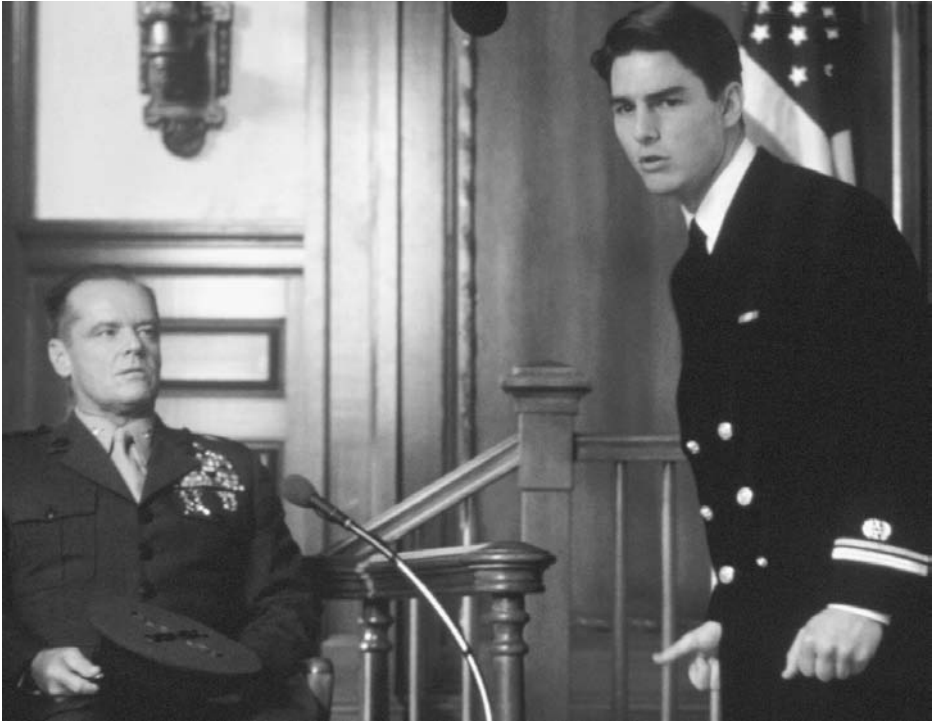
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—Kenneth Shonk

FEW GOOD MEN, A. For many moviegoers, Rob Reiner's *A Few Good Men* (1992) is one of the best courtroom dramas ever made, and it is (not coincidentally) his most commercially successful film to date. Adapted from Aaron Sorkin's stage play of the same name, *A Few Good Men* can claim not only consistently memorable performances, but it can also boast of an iconic tagline—“You can't handle the truth”—uttered with characteristic vehemence by Jack Nicholson, whose character (Colonel Jessup) is a tone-perfect portrait of a military hero gone slightly mad. Like Sorkin, Reiner has become known for his advocacy of liberal causes and fervent support of the Democratic Party; yet, in crafting this film, he manages to temper his political biases with a hint of respect for the values of a military establishment he otherwise subjects to scathing analysis.

The plot of *A Few Good Men* is really two stories in one. The first story, which occupies center stage, is the court-martial of two young marines who are accused of “conduct unbecoming” after their hazing of a fellow soldier (a “Private Santiago”) leads to his death. Whether they were ordered to do so by their superior officers—an action referred to in marine parlance as a “code red”—or took it upon themselves to punish an uncooperative comrade is the question that sets this courtroom drama in motion. Beyond that purely legal issue, however, is the larger and more ambiguous issue of the limits of power, and on that point *A Few Good Men* takes a decisive stance. Colonel Jessup, whose command position at the Guantanamo Naval Base places him at the center of moral conflict, at first lies about his involvement in this incident, and it is



Tom Cruise and Jack Nicholson in Rob Reiner's *A Few Good Men*, 1992. (Photofest)

only under relentless cross-examination that he finally admits to having ordered a code red, without ever acknowledging any responsibility for the needless death he has caused. As played by Jack Nicholson, Jessup is part warrior, part patriotic windbag, and his demeanor on the stand makes it clear that, in his eyes, the authority he wields is nearly absolute, and certainly beyond legal challenge. For Reiner, Jessup's arrogance is both institutional and personal, and his ultimate humiliation then becomes a victory for political accountability as well as military justice.

The second, behind-the-scenes plotline focuses on the inner struggle of the film's chief protagonist, Lieutenant Daniel Kaffee, played by Tom Cruise. As his character traits unfold, we soon realize that Lt. Kaffee is still living in the shadow of his deceased but celebrated father, who once served as the Navy's Judge Advocate General. The prevailing view of the younger Kaffee is that he has inherited nothing of his father's skills or integrity, and as the trial begins he is obviously distressed that he cannot persuade the accused to take a plea bargain and avoid a court trial altogether. In fact, conflict avoidance seems to be the hallmark of his professional and personal life, and in the course of this drama we watch as Kaffee acquires both a backbone and a deeper sense of commitment to the law than one would have thought possible. Although in the end, he cannot prevent the court from drumming his clients out of the Corps with dishonorable discharges, Kaffee at least has the satisfaction of having brought down the truly guilty parties—Colonel Jessup and his equally surly subordinate, Captain

Jonathan Kendrick (played by Kiefer Sutherland)—and having restored some measure of accountability to the chain of command.

Complicating Kaffee's story of personal growth and self-redemption is the presence of two supporting characters whose influence on him is decisive and transformative: Lieutenant Commander JoAnne Galloway (played by Demi Moore) and Lieutenant Colonel Matthew Markinson (played by J. T. Walsh). Galloway's presence on Kaffee's prosecutorial team is Sorkin's and Reiner's rather conspicuous gesture toward the issue of gender politics, as her superior rank is not sufficient to entitle her to serve as first counsel. It's a man's navy, she is repeatedly told, and as a woman she can expect only to play a subordinate role in the legal process. Ironically, she is the one who stiffens Kaffee's spine and finally convinces him to pursue Jessup in the interests of justice. Shrewdly, Reiner refused to turn her into Kaffee's love interest (which would surely have trivialized her role), though the casting of Moore would almost seem to invite that plot development.

As for J. T. Walsh's Commander Markinson, his principal function is to serve as a foil to both Jessup and Kaffee. As Jessup's second-in-command, he feels both guilt and remorse for Santiago's death—emotions that Jessup is too arrogant to feel—along with an unforgiving sense of having dishonored the Corps by having become complicit in a lie; his suicide ultimately becomes a poignant gesture of contrition in a culture that scarcely allows for such gestures. By pointing Kaffee in the direction of a key piece of evidence, he all but insures the conviction of his commanding officer and reminds an otherwise cynical Kaffee that there are things worth living and dying for that have nothing to do with one's self-image or career.

In filming *A Few Good Men*, Reiner faced the same challenges that any director faces when adapting a theatrical work to the screen: how to remain reasonably faithful to the dramatic text without creating something unbearably static, i.e., a form of "canned" theatre. In this film, that means moving beyond the proscenium arch, occasionally taking his camera outdoors, while at the same time shooting the courtroom scenes from a variety of angles, employing mainly middle or close-up shots, thereby creating feelings of spatial and emotional intimacy. This technique is particularly evident when Colonel Jessup is on the stand and Kaffee is doing everything he can to provoke him into a self-condemning rage. The sparring match that ensues between Jack Nicholson and Tom Cruise provides exactly the kind of psychological suspense these scenes demand. And when, in these climactic scenes, the narrative arc and the arc of character development converge, Reiner achieves that perfect fusion of storytelling and emotional truth-telling to which all psychological dramas aspire.

See also: Nicholson, Jack; War Film, The

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—Robert Platzner

FIDDLER ON THE ROOF. Based on the Broadway musical of the same name, the film version of *Fiddler on the Roof* achieved as much success as its stage counterpart. The musical opened in 1964 and won the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award. It swept the 1965 Tony Awards, winning for best musical, actor, supporting actress, production, costume design, librettist, composer, and lyricist, and Jerome Robbins won for best director and choreographer. The inspiration came from stories by nineteenth-century writer, Sholom Aleichem, from which Joseph Stein adapted a play, originally released under the title *Tevye and His Daughters*. *Fiddler on the Roof* is an amalgamation of several of Aleichem's stories, which helped to develop a style of Jewish "shtick," Yiddish for comic stage routines, in America that had been incorporated into American theater long before the opening night of *Fiddler on the Roof* (Knapp, 2005). The musical marked the end of what is considered America's "Golden Age of Broadway" (Patinkin, 2008).

Like the stage production, the film tells the story of Russian Jews in the small town of Anatevka. Set in 1905, the story centers on Tevye (Topol) and his family. As a milkman with no dowry to offer his daughters, Tevye finds himself pressured into finding suitable husbands for his three eldest, Tzeitel (Rosalind Harris), Hodel (Michelle Marsh), and Chava (Neva Small), and constantly argues with his wife, Golde (Norma Crane), about their suitors. The story illustrates a clash between traditional Jewish customs and more modern ideas in a changing world. For example, even though Tevye promises Tzeitel to the butcher Lazar Wolf (Paul Mann), he allows Tzeitel to marry Motel (Leonard Frey), the young tailor, with whom she is in love. He must then convince Golde of the match and devises a dream where Grandma Tzeitel (Patience Collier) insists that Tzeitel and Motel were matched in heaven, and where Lazar Wolf's deceased wife, Fruma Sarah (Ruth Madoc), curses the marriage if it takes place. Hodel also marries for love; however, instead of asking Tevye's permission to marry Hodel, Perchik (Paul Michael Glaser), the progressive university student and revolutionary hired to teach Tevye's two younger daughters, only asks for Tevye's blessing. One tradition, though, that Tevye cannot allow his family to break, regardless of a changing world, is that of a marriage outside the Jewish faith. He disowns his third daughter, Chava, after she elopes with Fyedke (Raymond Lovelock), a Christian. In the end, the anti-Semitic Czar cleanses Russia of all Jews, forcing Tevye and his family to leave for America. The film incorporates themes of change, including marrying for love instead of money; feminism; and intermarriage between different faiths and races. The filmic examination of these themes not only foreshadowed the breaks with tradition that the family will face in their new home, but also spoke to contemporary 1970s American audiences who were dealing with the sea changes occurring in the United States in the wake of the civil rights and feminist movements of the 1960s (Knapp, 2005).

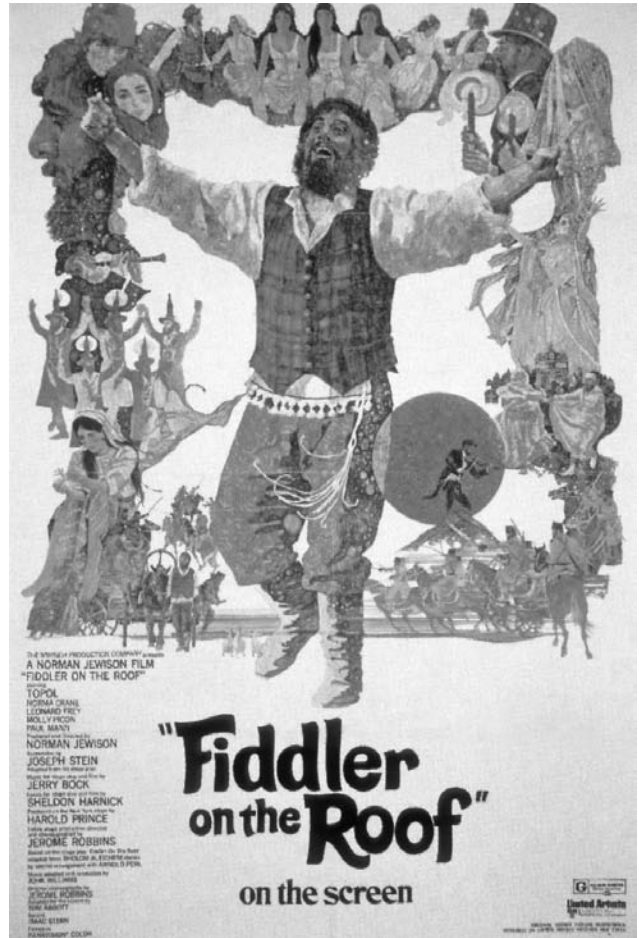
Released in 1971, the film incorporates all of the stage musical's original songs: "Matchmaker, Matchmaker," "If I Were a Rich Man," "To Life," "Sunrise, Sunset," and of course, "Tevye's Dream." Even though Robbins choreographed the film version of *West Side Story*, the Mirisch Brothers believed that he lacked the ability to adapt to the tempo and style required in filmmaking (Jowitt 2004). Thus, the Mirisch Brothers had Tom Abbott adapt Robbins's choreography for the film and hired Norman

Jewison to direct. Because of the difficulty caused by actor Zero Mostel's constant improvisation in the Broadway production, the Mirisch Brothers decided to cast the Israeli actor, Topol, who played Tevye to great acclaim in the London production (Jowitt, 2004; Patinkin, 2008). The film was nominated for eight Oscars, including Best Film, Best Director, Best Actor, and Best Supporting Actor; and won three, for Best Cinematography, Best Sound, and Best Music, Scoring Adaptation, and Original Song Score.

See also: Music in Film; Musical, The

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Poster for the 1971 film *Fiddler on the Roof*, directed by Norman Jewison. (Photofest)

—Jennifer K. Morrison

FINDING NEMO. Following the success of *Toy Story* (1995), Disney invested more time and money into computer animation, building its relationship with Pixar Studios. Since that time, Disney-Pixar has produced a number of memorable films, including *A Bug's Life* (1998), *Monsters Inc.* (2001), and *The Incredibles* (2004). While all have enjoyed critical and commercial success, perhaps Disney-Pixar's most recognizable film is *Finding Nemo* (2003). Despite Disney president Michael Eisner's

skepticism about the project during production, *Finding Nemo* won the 2004 Academy Award for Best Animated Feature.

The story follows a clown fish named Marlin (voiced by Albert Brooks), an overprotective father who, as a result of losing his wife and most of his unborn children to a shark, is generally scared of his surroundings. The only surviving child, Nemo (voiced by Alexander Gould), is all he has left, and he vows never to let any harm come to his son. Frustrated and embarrassed by his father's overprotective actions on his first day of school, Nemo swims out beyond the boundaries of the coral reef and is captured by a diver. Marlin unsuccessfully tries to chase down the diver's boat, which speeds away with his son. Distraught, Marlin eventually meets Dory (voiced by Ellen DeGeneres), who, despite suffering from the frustrating yet endearing disability of short-term memory loss, agrees to help Marlin find Nemo. Luckily, one of the things that Dory does remember is a Sydney, Australia, address that she happened to read off of a pair of goggles. As it turns out, it is to this address that Nemo has been taken.

During their perilous journey to Sydney to rescue Nemo, Marlin slowly begins to realize that his overprotective parenting may actually be harming his son, preventing Nemo from experiencing all that life has to offer. "You never really know," the wise old sea turtle Crush (voiced by Andrew Stanton) tells Marlin about children becoming their own people, "but when they know, you'll know." Marlin vows to change his ways should he ever find his son.

Meanwhile, Nemo is living in a dentist's fish tank in Sydney. There he meets Gill (voiced by Willem Dafoe), another ocean fish who is obsessed with escaping from his watery prison. During his time in the tank, Nemo gains the confidence he lacked as a result of his father's overprotective ways, eventually becoming the focal point of Gill's escape plan. The stakes are raised as Nemo is set to become a birthday gift for the dentist's niece, Darla (voiced by LuLu Ebeling), who is notorious for (unintentionally) killing fish. While the escape does not go as planned, Nemo manages to free himself by following Gill's advice: remember, "all drains lead to the ocean, kid."

After reuniting with his son, Marlin's resolution to allow him to be more independent is quickly tested when, to his father's horror, Nemo swims into a fishing net in order to save Dory. Using skills he learned from Gill, Nemo is able to save Dory and to emerge from the incident unhurt. Both father and son, it is clear, are changed by the harrowing experience. The film ends back at the reef where Nemo is successful at school, Marlin is proud of his son and relaxed with the other parents, and Dory is a member of the Friendly Sharks Club. Things even work out for the fish back at the dentist office, as they, too, eventually escape to the harbor.

A classic coming-of-age film, *Nemo* presents viewers with a nontraditional story: a single father and his son, both of whom must negotiate the complexities of the parent-child relationship. Unable to understand his father's abiding love for him, or his hopes and dreams, and especially his fears—do our parents really struggle with their own fragilities?—Nemo resents Marlin's overprotective ways; while for his part, Marlin, blinded by the tragic loss of nearly all of his family, cannot understand his son's need to make his own way in the world. Once they are both cast onto the path of their Joseph Campbell-like "hero's journey," however, both come to understand the other.

While critics of the film argued that the narrative flow of the picture reinforced the idea that the status quo should be conserved at all costs—after all, as soon as Nemo leaves the safety and security of the reef, disaster strikes—it may be argued that just the opposite is true: although life can, indeed, be frightening outside the protective barriers set in place by our families and communities, it is only by venturing beyond these borders, by exploring the diversity of the world in which we live, that it becomes possible for us to grow as individuals. A valuable lesson, it seems, for our children—and for us—to learn.

See also: Animation; Coming-of-Age Film, The

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—Sean Graham

FLAGS OF OUR FATHERS. Clint Eastwood's *Flags of Our Fathers* is a filmic companion piece to his *Letters from Iwo Jima*. Released in 2006, these two films represent Eastwood's attempt to reimagine the traditional World War II combat picture. Unique in that they explore the experiences of members of both the American and Japanese military, *Flags of Our Fathers* and *Letters from Iwo Jima* present audiences with a very different look at the horrors of war.

By the time he made *Flags of Our Fathers*, Eastwood had already won a Best Director Oscar for his 1992 revisionist western, *Unforgiven*. In that film, Eastwood had presented audiences with a new type of western, one that sought to deconstruct the myth of the West and the western hero. Seeking to do something similar in *Flags of Our Fathers*, Eastwood created a combat picture in which he attempted to trope the myth of the American war hero. Unlike *Unforgiven*, which relates the story of a fictitious gunslinger who has outlived his usefulness, *Flags of Our Fathers* explores the real-life drama that surrounded the publication of Joe Rosenthal's iconic photograph of the American flag being raised on Mount Suribachi during the Battle of Iwo Jima.

The Battle of Iwo Jima lasted for 35 bloody days, stretching from February 19 to March 26, 1945. The invasion and conquest of Iwo Jima was considered an essential component of the U.S. strategy of "island-hopping" across the Pacific toward the Japanese mainland. Taking Iwo Jima, with its airfields, reasoned U.S. military commanders, would allow B-52 bombing missions on the Japanese mainland to be carried out more effectively; it would also limit further kamikaze missions against American battleships from being carried out by Japanese pilots.

Taking the island proved extraordinarily difficult, as the Japanese commander, Lieutenant General Tadamichi Kuribayashi, had ordered his soldiers to construct a series of heavily fortified underground bunkers connected by miles of interconnected tunnels. After 74 days of unrelenting bombing of the island—which proved to have little effect



Scene from the 2006 film *Flags of Our Fathers*, directed by Clint Eastwood. (Photofest)

on the Japanese positions—American Marines launched a massive assault along the Iwo Jima beaches. The first Marines who went ashore were met with an eerie silence, as Kuribayashi had ordered his men to withhold their fire until the American troops had moved well inland. American forces eventually faced withering machine-gun fire, which cut their battle lines to pieces. In the end, although they were successful in taking the island from the Japanese, over 6,000 Americans died on Iwo Jima, with U.S. casualties numbering over 23,000—more than during the D-Day invasion at Normandy. Of the more than 22,000 Japanese soldiers who were defending the island when the Americans landed, a mere 212 were taken prisoner; the rest either died or were declared missing.

Five days into the fighting, on February 23, 1945, orders were given that an American flag be raised on Mount Suribachi. Photos were taken of this initial flag raising by Louis R. Lowery. As fate would have it, Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal arrived on the beach below Suribachi shortly after the flag was raised. Impassioned as he stood watching the flag blowing in the wind—the first American flag planted in Japan—he demanded it for himself. Believing that the flag belonged to the men of the Marine 2nd Battalion, who had captured this section of the island, Colonel Chandler Johnson ordered Sergeant Mike Strank to raise a replacement flag on the mountain. Strank, of course, followed orders, and along with Ira Hayes, Franklin Sousley, John Bradley, Rene Gagnon,

and Harlon Block, he lifted a substitute flag into place later that day. It was this second, largely unremarkable act of flag raising that was captured in Rosenthal's famous photograph.

War-weary Americans cheered the photo when it appeared on the front pages of almost every newspaper in the United States. The myth that surrounded the image, the release of which helped to convince the American people that the heroic struggle must go on, had begun to be spun almost immediately after the photo was developed—the six men in the picture had risked their lives to raise the flag after they and their combat brothers had fought their way to the top of Mount Suribachi. In reality, although the Marines who reached the top of Suribachi that day had encountered sporadic fire from a few Japanese soldiers, their ascent of the mountain had been relatively uneventful.

Tragically, Strank, Sousley, and Block died on Iwo Jima; Hayes, Gagnon, and Bradley—whose son wrote the book from which Eastwood adapted the film—made it off the island alive, however, and were shipped back to the United States before their tours of duty ended. Heralded as conquering heroes, the three were enlisted by President Franklin Roosevelt and his Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau, to help sell American war bonds. Just before he died, Roosevelt had Morgenthau arrange what came to be known as the 7th War Bond Tour. After Roosevelt's death in April 1945, members of the Truman administration—including the President himself—pressured Hayes, Bradley, and Gagnon into travelling the country in order to raise money for the war effort. Along the way, as it turned out, they also ended up selling the myth of the flag raising.

Eastwood does an admirable job portraying the unsettling experiences suffered by Hayes (Adam Beach), Bradley (Ryan Phillippe), and Gagnon (Jesse Bradford), who are hustled from venue to venue by a fast-talking member of the Treasury Department, Bud Gerber (John Slattery). None of the three sees himself as particularly heroic—indeed, all go to great pains to point out, repeatedly, that it was the men who died on Iwo Jima who were the real heroes, their self-effacing attitudes, ironically, making them seem all the more heroic. Perhaps Hayes is the most tragic of the three figures. An American Indian, his victory tour is marked by his having to endure disturbing remarks about his ethnic heritage and descends into discomfiting bouts of drunkenness—at one point Bradley must even rescue him from being taken to jail after he is refused service in a bar and causes a ruckus. In the end, Hayes, who in real life became an embarrassment to the military, is shipped back to the Pacific, where he remains during the last few months of the war. After the war, he was forced into menial jobs, supplementing his income by posing for people eager to have their picture taken with a real live war hero; wandering the country, he is eventually found dead from “exposure.”

Rene Gagnon, the handsome, poster-boy figure of the group seems to enjoy all of the adulation—including offers from starstruck businessmen—but he ultimately becomes “yesterday's hero.” Although the real-life Gagnon attempted to turn his celebrity into a movie career (he appeared in a government-funded documentary, *To the Shores of Iwo Jima*, and briefly in John Wayne's 1949 film *Sands of Iwo Jima*), he ended

up marrying his cloying girlfriend, who turned into a media darling during the tour, and living out his life bitterly drifting from job to job until his all-too-early death at the age of 54. For his part, Bradley, the only one who actually seemed to understand just how disturbing the whole mythic situation really was, remained haunted for the rest of his life by the loss of a combat buddy who was tortured and killed by the Japanese on Iwo Jima. On his deathbed, he tells his son a story about the American soldiers being allowed to swim in the ocean surrounding the island: "After we planted the flag," says Bradley, "we came down off the mountain and they let us swim. It was the funniest thing . . . all this fighting, and we were jumping around in the water like kids." An absurd scene, Bradley seems to be saying, revealing both the futility of war and also the horrible consequences of mythmaking.

See also: Eastwood, Clint; Letters from Iwo Jima; War Film, The

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—Claire Puccia Parham

400 BLOWS, THE. The first feature-length film by 27-year-old François Truffaut, *The 400 Blows* (*Les Quatres-cents coups*) premiered at the Cannes Film Festival to immediate acclaim in 1959, the so-called *annus mirabilis* of the French New Wave. Twenty-four French directors made their initial features that year (followed by 43 others in 1960)—a tidal wave of fresh filmmaking talent who stormed the French film industry, and whose influence shortly thereafter washed over the shores of America.

Truffaut's film almost immediately became the international emblem of French New Wave aesthetics. It embodied the principles of "Camera Stylo" (theorist André Astruc's notion that the camera should be as fluid an instrument of self-expression for a film director as a pen is for a writer); it was shot on the streets of Paris and surrounding environs in an improvisatory fashion (Truffaut used handheld cameras and natural lighting); and it communicated emotion to the audience not by means of sculpted dramatic dialogue but through scenes that recorded ordinary, daily situations. What *The 400 Blows* lacked in "traditional" polish it gained in immediacy: it seemed to herald a cinema of feeling and thought, made without studio contrivance—a cinema, in short, that could capture an artist's particular sensibility.

In Truffaut's case the sensibility was delicately lyrical. While *The 400 Blows* is about a child edging toward delinquency and institutionalization (the film grew out of Truffaut's own troubled youth; the title is taken from a vernacular phrase meaning "to raise hell"), its impact lies not in any shocking exposé of child abuse or criminality, but in Truffaut's ability to make small moments seem representative of the universal

experience of childhood loneliness and pain. Even though Truffaut's autobiographical protagonist suffers through the neglect of his parents and the obdurate policies of the French educational and juvenile justice systems, *The 400 Blows* isn't a thesis film trying to make a social point. Rather, Truffaut wants us to experience Antoine Doinel's feelings: the embarrassment of being caught clowning; the joy of playing hooky; the isolation of hearing parents argue; the sting of the public slap in the face. Antoine's emotions are conveyed, paradoxically enough, through the documentary quality of the black-and-white CinemaScope cinematography, which suffuses the film with a tender, subjective intimacy: For instance, the streets of Paris shine with life and possibility during Antoine's night out with his parents; later, when he is turned over to the police for theft, those same streets, seen from the back of a police van transporting him to detention, seem to shimmer through eyes of tears.

Truffaut's main actor, 14-year-old Jean-Pierre L  aud, became associated not only with the character of Antoine Doinel (he played Doinel again in Truffaut's three feature-length films that completed the character's saga, *Stolen Kisses* [1968], *Bed and Board* [1973], and *Love on the Run* [1979]), but with Truffaut himself, serving as a kind of cinematic alter ego of the director. L  aud's often whimsical, romantic, and softly ironic screen persona, developed over a 20-year career, seems in retrospect oddly dissimilar to the unsettling impression with which he leaves audiences at the end of *The 400 Blows*. Having escaped from a work farm, Antoine Doinel is followed in a long tracking shot as he jogs to the sea. With nowhere left to run, he turns to the camera as Truffaut moves to a close-up and then freezes the frame. Doinel himself seems to challenge us to ponder his fate.

This startling final shot of *The 400 Blows* embodies at once the vibrant humanism and conscious self-reflexivity of the New Wave sensibility that rejected studio paradigms of closed or happy endings while allowing for obvious manipulations of cinematic techniques in otherwise realistic narratives. Such effects would be borrowed and extended throughout the New American Cinema of the 1960s and '70s, most notably in the seminal *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), which the producers originally hoped to be directed by Truffaut. Truffaut said no, but the impact of his film was clear: he had shown the world that film artists could shoot on location, work quickly, and eschew not only in theory but in practice the creaky storytelling and moribund production values of studio films in order to champion a cinema of spontaneity and personal vision.

See also: Auteur Theory; French New Wave; Truffaut, Fran  ois

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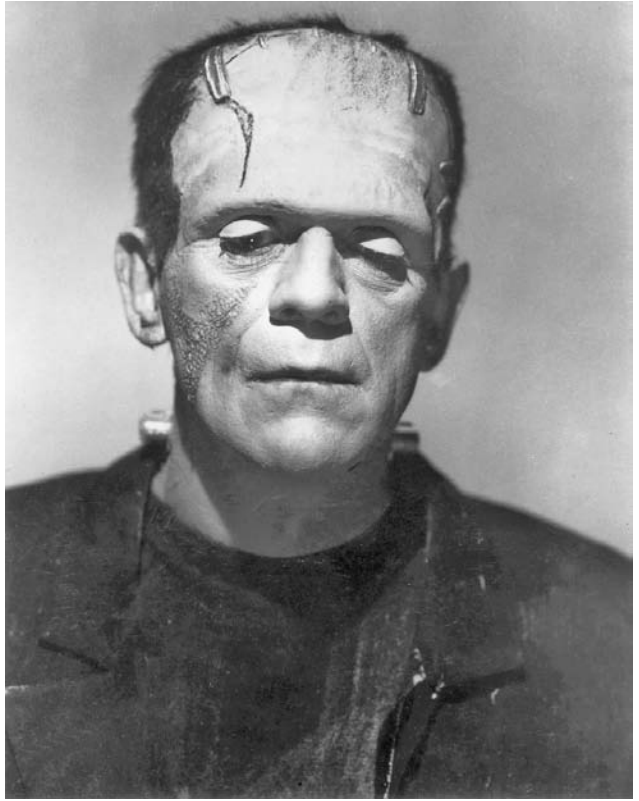
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—Robert Cowgill

FRANKENSTEIN.

The 1931 film *Frankenstein* was the second of Universal Studios' famous "Monster" films. It followed the release of the 1930 picture *Dracula*, starring Bela Lugosi. The former film was based on the classic 1818 Gothic novel, *Frankenstein, Or the Modern Prometheus*, written by 19-year-old Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, the young girlfriend—and eventually wife—of the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley and daughter of early feminist Mary Wollstonecraft. Legend has it that the original story, portraying a scientist who attempts to discover the secret of life by fashioning a creature from pieces of cadavers, was the result of a contest between the Shelleys and their friend the poet Lord Byron to determine who could produce the most horrifying tale. The young Mary won.

Frankenstein was the second big-screen adaptation of the Shelley story. The first was written and directed by J. Searle Dawley and produced by Thomas Edison's Edison Studios. The Dawley film, not unexpectedly, was a shorter, silent version, lacking the depth of writing, acting, and "special effects" that would make its successor so legendary. Produced by Carl Laemmle Jr., with a script co-written by Francis Faragoh and Garrett Fort, with assistance from Robert Florey and John Russell, the Universal project was directed by James Whale. In perhaps his greatest screen triumph, Boris Karloff, aided by the makeup artistry of Jack Pierce, gave an immortal performance as "the Creature." The film's title character—frequently thought to be the creature himself—was played by Colin Clive, whose performance as the mad Dr. Henry Frankenstein has become nearly as immortal as Karloff's. The cast also included Edward Van Sloan, who followed his success playing the legendary Van Helsing in *Dracula* with another great performance in *Frankenstein*.



British actor Boris Karloff poses as the Monster in a promotional portrait for director James Whale's film *Frankenstein*. (Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

The filmmakers took a great deal of dramatic license in adapting Shelley's masterpiece. Looking much more like the nineteenth century stage plays that had preceded it, the story begins in medias res, with the mad doctor already having begun his collection of cadavers. His assistant, Fritz—a creation of the stage plays, not having appeared in the original novel—breaks into the local university, stealing a brain for his employer. Unfortunately, after accidentally destroying the “brilliant” brain he was sent to procure, Fritz steals instead an “abnormal” brain, which, when inserted into the creature, gives rise to his violent nature and lack of intelligence. After the creature kills Fritz, who has taken great delight in torturing the monster, Henry Frankenstein decides that his creation is a lost cause, and leaves to go back to his family villa to prepare for his pending marriage to his fiancée, Elizabeth, played by Mae Clark. When the creature escapes and disrupts the ceremony, Henry leads the local citizenry on a hunt for the monster. Finding him, Henry falls victim to the creature, who knocks him unconscious and takes him to a local windmill. As the angry mob sets fire to the windmill, the creature throws Henry from the top of the structure, apparently killing him. (Fans learned in the sequel that Dr. Frankenstein actually survived his fall.) As the picture ends, the creature appears to die within the burning structure.

Frankenstein cemented Universal's monster movie franchise. Soon, the creature outshone Dracula as “king of the monsters.” Depression-era Americans could relate to the poor creature, confused about where he has come from or where he should go, and uncertain as to whom he could trust. This story resonated with pre-New Dealers. By the time of World War II, however, the creature had gone from a sympathetic character to a marauding monster, the stuff of nightmares. This, too, was important to his time, as Americans with family members fighting overseas needed fictional nightmares to distract them from what they were seeing on newsreels.

Today, images from Whale's film remain elemental within American culture. Though depictions of Frankenstein's monstrous offspring had existed for more than a century before the picture was made, the idea of the creature that Karloff brought to life on the big screen clearly remains the most popular today. Producers of numerous films, television series, cartoons, commercials, and Halloween costumes have imitated the film version of the monster, making the figure iconic not only in America but worldwide. In the hearts and minds of millions, the monster lives!

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—Richard A. Hall

FRENCH CONNECTION, THE. *The French Connection* (1971) offers a conservative response to the 1960s, as the law and order of the first Nixon administration was brought to film. Jimmy “Popeye” Doyle (Gene Hackman), the film's unsympathetic



Actor Gene Hackman (wearing hat) takes notes at a bar in a still from the film *The French Connection*, directed by William Friedkin, 1971. (Twentieth Century-Fox/Courtesy of Getty Images)

and mostly despicable antihero who makes his own rules—we never see him reading a suspect his Miranda rights, for instance—has no hard evidence of a crime and little to confirm the conspiracy he imagines. His intuition alone sets up the story, and the viewer is forced to accede to Doyle's gut feelings and therefore becomes implicated in the mess that follows.

William Friedkin directed this wildly popular and critically acclaimed adaptation of Robin Moore's screenplay based on the book of the same name, which recounted the adventures of New York City narcotics policemen Eddie Egan and Sonny Grosso. In the film, Doyle and his partner Buddy Russo (Roy Scheider) follow a hunch and unravel a heroin deal with French origins. Doyle pursues his suspects with little respect for the law and with an unflagging, often destructive, desire to punish them. The rough and gritty feel of the film is accentuated by shooting on location and long handheld camera shots of the bitter cold, New York winter. The weeks Friedkin, Hackman, and Scheider spent following Egan and Grosso, not only witnessing drug busts but participating in them as well, further heightens this sense of realism. Along with its popular success, *The French Connection* won Academy Awards for Best Picture (the first R-rated film to win this award), Best Director, Best

Actor (Gene Hackman), Best Editing (Jerry Greenberg), and Best Adapted Screenplay (Ernest Tidyman). The film also received nominations for Best Supporting Actor (Roy Scheider), Best Cinematography (Owen Roizman), and Best Sound. And if there were an award for best chase scene that year, it would have won for that as well.

The story follows Doyle and Russo as they stumble onto a plot to bring heroin into New York via a French connection. While unwinding at a nightclub after an undercover arrest, the two begin watching patrons with suspected mob ties. They decide to follow one of these men home and discover that he lives beyond his means. Supposing a link to illegal drug activity, Doyle and Russo bust a bar in their neighborhood to find that nobody possesses any drugs of substance. While interrogating a man who turns out to be an informant, Doyle learns that a shipment of heroin is expected soon. His gut tells him his mob connected nightclub patrons must be the source, and he and Russo begin a long and difficult stakeout with FBI assistance.

French heroin smuggler Alain Charnier (Fernando Rey) detects he is being followed through the streets of New York and dispatches his assistant to kill Doyle. Surviving the attempt, Doyle chases his assailant in what would become one of the most famous car chases in movie history and shoots him. In the meantime, police find an imported car they suspect contains drugs. While initial searches turn up nothing, Doyle and Russo tear the car to pieces to find the heroin stashed in the car's rocker panels. They replace the drugs, repair the car, and give it back to its owner. The planned drug deal transpires, but with police surveillance, and as Charnier drives away, police attempt to intercept him, and he flees. In Doyle's obsession to catch the Frenchman, he accidentally shoots and kills the federal agent helping with the case. It seemed Charnier was trapped, but ultimately, he escapes. Most of those caught serve no or very little time in prison. This unsatisfying ending only adds to the film's discomfiting sense that criminals in even Nixon's law-and-order America get off too lightly.

In the end, Doyle and the viewers are left feeling frustrated as the violence and Doyle's doggedness lead to few important arrests. The film fits well in the late Vietnam War period as it blurs the line between criminality and righteousness. Doyle, as the antihero, is flawed. He breaks the law to uphold the law. Subsequently, he and the viewers are left very unsatisfied. The less critically acclaimed sequel, however, brings us right back to the action.

See also: Friedkin, William; *Hard-Boiled Detective Film*, The

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—Chad H. Parker

FRIDAY THE 13TH. Sean S. Cunningham's *Friday the 13th* (1980) inaugurates perhaps the most enduring of horror franchises, where variation is conceived of more as a hindrance than a virtue. In terms of sheer volume, no horror series has shown the durability of this one, which presently includes 11 sequels, or reimaginings. It may be, however, that these successive features have diluted the distinctive elements of Cunningham's original film, allowing his vision to become merely formulaic. Fashioned by Cunningham to capitalize on the extraordinary success of John Carpenter's *Halloween* (1978), *Friday the 13th* brought innovative complexities to the horror film genre. In crafting a film scenario in which the antagonist, Mrs. Voorhees (Betsy Palmer), is revealed to be a middle-aged mother who mercilessly strikes down teenagers who continually violate the strict social and sexual mores at Camp Crystal Lake, Cunningham offers us a cautionary tale that succeeds in warning against sexual impropriety even as it fetishizes violent transgression.

While Cunningham recycles much of the killer's subjective, and inherently voyeuristic, point-of-view camera compositions that epitomized *Halloween*, here gender ambiguity is a vital new detail. Because Cunningham avoids revealing anything about the psychotic killer beyond the fact that the figure is dressed in men's gloves and boots, audiences assume that the slayer is a man. Playing on this, Cunningham skillfully directs our attention toward any number of socially awkward male townies who appear in the film's first few scenes. Whereas *Halloween's* twist locks the viewer into the presupposition of a maniacal adult killer in the film's opening, only to reveal rather too quickly that Michael Myers is a bewildered child, Cunningham sustains the eerie indeterminacy of the killer's age, social status, and gender deep into his film. The use of this cinematic process of abstraction allows the film to linger over the ambiguous nature of evil until 'sits climactic last act. Only then does he reveal that the killer is actually Mrs. Voorhees and that she is possessed of her own twisted logic: because she cannot forgive a group of wayward teens who, fixated on their own, highly inappropriate sexual activities, allowed her son, Jason, to drown in the waters of Camp Crystal Lake decades before, she is seeking to prevent further losses, even if only in her own mind, by slaughtering the newly arrived teens who are attempting to reopen the camp.

Significantly, the film, and the series as a whole, provides audiences with images of teenagers escaping from the confines of parental authority, smoking marijuana, and engaging in promiscuous sex. Even Alice (Adrienne King), the protagonist of *Friday the 13th*, serves as a counterpoint to the "Final Girl" archetype of horror films: while most of the young female protagonists who appear in these films tend to be tomboyish and reject the sexual activities engaged in by their friends, Alice is not only sexy but sexual. Yet, while the film seems to imply that teenage sexual relationships are to be condoned, even valorized, because they represent adolescent moments of antiauthoritarian rebellion, in the *Friday the 13th* series, the teenagers who commit these sins of the flesh are systematically hunted down and disposed of in ritualistic fashion. It may be argued, then, that *Friday the 13th* exhibits a certain sense of antisexual Puritanism.

Oddly, while sexuality is punished in *Friday the 13th*, violence is glorified. Indeed, Cunningham seems to revel in creating violent moments that are infused with a certain

fetishistic glee. Even Alice gets into the act, as after her friends are massacred, she decapitates Mrs. Voorhees with her own machete. After fleeing the scene in a rowboat, audiences are provided with a final scare when Alice is apparently attacked by Mrs. Voorhees's drowned man-child Jason, who surfaces from his watery grave in Crystal Lake in order to drag our protagonist to her death. When she is revived, doctors assure Alice that no such villain exists. Though Cunningham has admitted that this scene was merely an afterthought, added to provide viewers one last moment of fright, it has become the linchpin for the subsequent series entries.

Unfortunately, other directors who have helmed certain of the *Friday the 13th* sequels have refashioned Cunningham's original vision in a disturbingly uninspired way. The films in the series, it seems, have become nothing more than rote narratives about teenage sex and slaughter.

See also: Slasher Films

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—Paul D. Petrovic

FRONT, THE. *The Front*, released in 1976, was the first major motion picture to address directly the topic of the entertainment industry blacklist. Starring Woody Allen and directed by Martin Ritt, the film was a pointed critique of the anticommunist hysteria that affected film and television workers from the late 1940s through the early 1960s. Its release represented a “thaw” of the cultural Cold War, and it helped initiate a dialogue regarding the blacklist that continues today.

The Front was conceived by Ritt and screenwriter Walter Bernstein, both of whom had been barred from working in the entertainment industry in the 1950s. Other notable members of the film's cast and crew had been blacklisted also, including actor Zero Mostel, who appeared before the House Un-American Activities Committee as an unfriendly witness. Mostel's character in the film, Hecky Brown, experiences an embarrassing episode at a nightclub in the Catskills in which the club pays Brown only a small percentage of his traditional fee, because the club manager knows that Hecky cannot find work. The episode was drawn directly from Mostel's own experience as a blacklisted actor.

But most of the film's plot devices derive directly from the real-life experiences of Walter Bernstein. Desperate for work in the 1950s, he began writing under fake names, but Hollywood studios and television networks quickly caught on to this practice. He devised the “front” system, under which blacklisted writers employed other writers to put their names on the scripts. In *The Front*, Woody Allen's character,

Howard Prince, serves as the front for his friend who has been named as a communist sympathizer.

The Front straddles a line between drama and comedy, and between biopic and fiction. The film begins with a montage of newsreels that show Senator Joseph McCarthy, Marilyn Monroe, the Rosenbergs, and soldiers in the Korean War, in order to establish the historical basis of the story. But although Bernstein's script is peppered with details from his own experiences, such as a depiction of how blacklistees and their fronts discussed how to report income on their tax forms, the narrative's emphasis on Woody Allen's character lends the film a satirical edge.

Howard Prince is naive, selfish, and uninterested in the politics of the early Cold War era. Working as a front is a way for Prince to earn money to pay off his gambling debts, and to impress women with his sudden apparent talent for writing television scripts. The film thus follows Prince's development of a social conscience, until he finally takes a principled stand against the McCarthyist witch hunt at the conclusion of the film.

Bernstein's Oscar-nominated screenplay deftly weaves together the film's separate threads. Hecky Brown becomes increasingly pressured to name names or to forfeit his career. As Prince's star rises, he becomes further entangled in the dangerous world of the Red Scare, and he develops a close relationship with Brown. We also get glimpses inside the workings of the Freedom Information Service, a business that maintains the blacklist in New York City, and which is modeled after the real-life organization American Business Consultants. But another subplot, in which Prince woos a television story editor who is under the assumption that Prince is a gifted writer, suggests that the film may be considered more of a Woody Allen comedy than a commentary on McCarthyist America. Although it brought the film an audience, Ritt would later express regret over the casting of Allen.

The release of *The Front* roughly coincided with that of a biography of blacklisted screenwriter Dalton Trumbo, as well as a documentary called *Hollywood on Trial*, and helped to foment a public dialogue about the blacklist that had not existed prior to the mid-'70s. But Ritt said that he would have liked to make another movie about the entertainment industry blacklist, a movie that was more dramatic and less comedic. However, the reescalation of the Cold War in the late 1970s and '80s made the climate in Hollywood less hospitable to such a film. It would not be until 1991's *Guilty by Suspicion*, which was directed by Irwin Winkler and starred Robert De Niro, that a major film would again tackle the entertainment industry blacklist.

See also: Hollywood Blacklist, The; HUAC Hearings

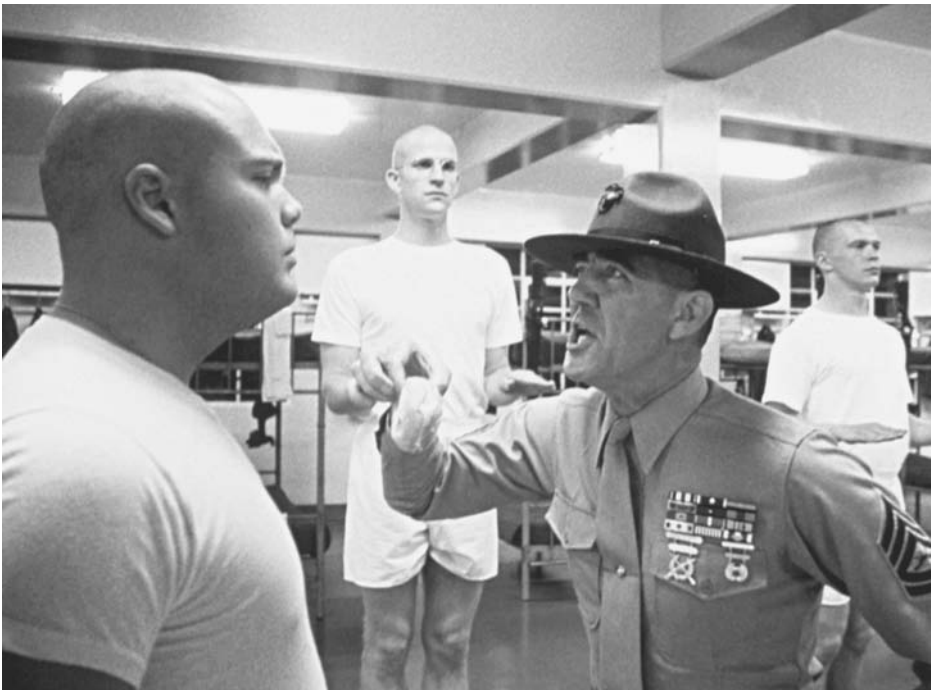
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—Andrew Paul

FULL METAL JACKET. *Full Metal Jacket* (1987) is the last of a trio of antiwar films that Stanley Kubrick partially wrote and directed, and in many ways it is the most complete and complex statement of Kubrick's vision of war. Based on a 1979 novel by Gustav Hasford, *The Short-Timers*, Kubrick's film attempts to capture Hasford's sense of the comic absurdity and brutality of modern warfare, while providing a largely satirical view of America's involvement in Vietnam. Like *Paths of Glory* (1957) and *Dr. Strangelove* (1964), which preceded it, *Full Metal Jacket* combines naturalism and surrealism in the service of sharp political commentary. Though frequently compared with Oliver Stone's *Platoon* (1986), Kubrick's war movie maintains a greater ironic distance from both its characters and its setting than Stone's more melodramatic account of lost innocence.

Viewed structurally, *Full Metal Jacket* is really two films in one: the first part, a composite portrait of Marine Corps basic training at Parris Island, South Carolina, and the second, an up-close account of combat in Vietnam leading up to the North Vietnamese attack on the city of Hue in 1968. In each of these segments, Kubrick focuses on the thoughts and emotions—occasionally expressed through voice-over narration—of one principal character, Private James T. Davis, better known by his nom de guerre as “Joker” (Matthew Modine). Joker's relentless sarcasm creates an ironic distance between himself and the institutionalized madness of the warrior culture of which he has become a part, while his ambivalence toward the Corps and toward the war itself, neatly symbolized by the juxtaposed peace button and inscription “Born to



Scene from the 1987 film *Full Metal Jacket*, directed by Stanley Kubrick. (Photofest)

Kill” that appear on his helmet, quickly becomes the defining perspective through which everything and everyone is seen.

Viewed thematically, the two “acts” of this film are tied together by an ongoing satirical meditation on the nature of modern warfare and on a belief in the “killer instinct” that lies at the heart of every military culture. In order to turn ordinary young men into effective soldiers, the Marine Corps has to accomplish a virtual metamorphosis of the civilian personality, and appropriately the opening scene of the film shows a group of fresh recruits getting sheared to the tune of “Good-Bye Darling, Hello Vietnam”—the first stage in a radical transformation that entails shedding one identity and assuming another. In the scene that follows immediately after, these same recruits are subjected to a torrent of abuse from their drill sergeant (R. Lee Ermey) (incongruously named Sergeant “Hartman”) that not only robs them of their dignity but also deprives them of their names: from this moment on they will be known strictly by their appointed nicknames, names like “Joker,” “Cowboy,” and “Snowball.”

At first, the opening sequence on Parris Island resembles, to a degree, similar sequences in what are generally termed “service comedies”—movies in which the trials and tribulations of boot camp are played mainly for laughs (*Stripes*, 1981, for example). In *Full Metal Jacket*, however, this comedy of errors soon turns into a nightmare of persecution, as one particular recruit—a hapless and overweight young man of limited intelligence and fragile emotions, nicknamed “Gomer Pyle” (Vincent D’Onofrio)—becomes the special target of Sergeant Hartman’s ire and abuse. The horrific climax of this first part of Kubrick’s film occurs in the barracks’ bathroom, where, having descended into a condition of self-hatred and homicidal rage, Pyle first kills Sergeant Hartman and then himself with full metal-jacketed bullets from his government issue M-14, while Joker looks on in horror, helpless to do anything. Kubrick bathes this scene in an eerie blue light, and surrounds the action with dissonant musical sounds (composed by Vivian Kubrick, Stanley’s daughter), suggesting that his characters are caught up in a bad dream from which they cannot awaken. Kubrick returns to this hallucinatory visual/aural style near the end of the film, when, once again, Joker becomes an unwilling participant in a mad ritual of murder and revenge.

Part two of *Full Metal Jacket* shifts abruptly to a sidewalk in Saigon (to the tune of Nancy Sinatra’s “These Boots Are Made for Walkin’”), where Joker and his photographer sidekick, “Rafterman” (Kevyn Major Howard), are set upon by a hooker and then her pimp, who proceeds to steal Rafterman’s camera. The prostitute’s “Me So Horny” routine quickly entered popular culture after the film’s release, and became a refrain in comic skits with audiences who had never seen the movie; but the darker side of this sequence becomes apparent when one considers that Kubrick’s consistent view of the South Vietnamese population is that this war was not *their* war, and that they had decided to take every opportunity to exploit and betray their would-be American “saviors.” Critics of this film have found this representation of South Vietnamese attitudes offensive and even racist, but in Kubrick’s defense, it would have been a distortion of historical reality to have presented the average GI’s view of the war in any other light. Clearly, Kubrick was determined not to repeat what he saw as the propagandistic myths of John Wayne’s *Green Berets* (1968).

The battle for Hue constitutes not only the climax of *Full Metal Jacket's* second "act," but also the moment of dramatic truth for the film as a whole; and to ensure the authenticity of his narrative, Kubrick studied photographs of the city, before and after the siege. Having purchased what was left of the English industrial town of Becton and its gasworks, Kubrick proceeded to blow up half the remaining buildings, and then to stage the key firefights amid the ruins. Using a combination of handheld and tracking shots, he makes the "fog of war" as kinetically real as any cinematic image can be, leading up to a moment of self-realization for which Joker has been unconsciously preparing since boot camp. For in the ruins of an abandoned building, from which an unseen sniper has been picking off one Marine after another, Joker finally gets the chance to learn whether or not he can put on what Sergeant Hartman called his "killer face"—and to adopt the "hard heart" that must go along with it if that face is to mean anything. Now in the building and pinned down by the sniper—who turns out to be, disturbingly on a number of levels, a teenage girl in pigtails—Joker attempts to fire his rifle, only to have it jam; in a spasm of terror he assumes a fetal crouch, unable to fire his pistol even to defend himself. Joker's life is ultimately saved by Rafterman, who, mortally wounding the sniper, fails to kill her outright. That task falls to Joker, and in yet another ritualized killing—one that both resembles and contradicts the earlier shooting of Sergeant Hartman—Joker kills his would-be assassin, putting her out of her misery, although, perhaps, insuring that he would long suffer his own. By committing what is essentially a mercy killing, Joker is compelled to acknowledge not only the barbarity of war itself, but also the complex savagery of the human heart. In the final words of Pyle, Joker finds himself in a "world of shit," but nevertheless remains determined to retain a remnant of his humanity.

See also: Kubrick, Stanley; War Film, The

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—Robert Platzner

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GATTACA. Being an “outsider” is all a matter of perspective. In a frail world, perfection is freakish and strange. But in a perfect world, merely being human is to be marked an outcast. In *Gattaca* (1997), Vincent Freeman (Ethan Hawke) is an “In-Valid,” a person born without the interference of bioengineering. In a world where babies can be genetically designed, like a custom-made car, Vincent’s parents chose to have him conceived and born naturally. Unfortunately, this “faith birth” produced a child predestined to have myopia, a heart condition, and a short life span. He is the new target of futuristic bigotry (“It doesn’t matter where you were born, but *how*”).

His parents did not make the same mistake twice. Vincent’s younger brother was planned as a “normal” birth; he would come into the world as a genetically perfect being. The two grow up as it must be, one frail and vulnerable, the other strong and durable. Why is it, then, that it is Vincent who outlasts his brother while they are one day swimming in the surf?

Vincent, who grows up nursing a passionate desire to be an astronaut, leaves home and goes to work at Gattaca, an aerospace center. But as an “In-Valid,” he does not stand a chance to become an astronaut. Hope arrives, though, in the form of Jerome (Jude Law), a genetically perfect specimen who is confined to a wheelchair because of an auto accident. Jerome sells Vincent his body, so to speak; in other words, he sells him nail filings, blood and urine specimens, strands of hair—anything Vincent needs to get past the detectors at Gattaca. So Vincent becomes “Jerome,” at least in the eyes of his employers at Gattaca. Through sheer perseverance and hard work—he has to strip naked and scrub his body free of telltale skin flakes every day (a kind of ritual rebirthing process)—he rises in the ranks and is soon chosen to go on a space flight to Titan, a moon of Jupiter.

But when a Gattaca executive is murdered, and one of Vincent’s eyelashes is found at his workstation, Vincent becomes the target of a search. For a while, with the aid of a lovely young worker at Gattaca, Irene (Uma Thurman), who is also an “In-Valid” who suffers from a heart ailment, Vincent evades detection. (The murderer turns out to be the space mission control director [Gore Vidal], who killed out of concern that the mission might be scrubbed by his superior officer.) But the investigating officer soon

tracks him down and reveals himself to be Vincent's long-lost brother. He cannot believe Vincent has evaded detection for so long. After all, Vincent is the frail one. The brother taunts him to take one last swim, to demonstrate how he, after all, is stronger than Vincent. The two swim out past the breakers in a nocturnal swim. "Shouldn't we turn back," shouts the brother, after a time, "we can't see the shore anymore." Vincent just forges on. "That's how I beat you," he replies, "I swim out with no thought of saving enough to swim back." And *that's* Vincent's secret. His perfect, driving passion ultimately allows him to defy his imperfect body.

Gattaca is a powerfully understated and thought-provoking sci-fi/fantasy film. First-time director Andrew Niccol served up a beautifully crafted product, a sleek story set in a vaguely futuristic world bathed in a palette of lemon-yellows and rusty salmons. (The film was shot by Krzysztof Kieslowski's brilliant cinematographer Slawomir Idziak.) The workers are surrounded by vast spaces of metallic reflecting surfaces (using as a central location Frank Lloyd Wright's Marin County Civic Center) and brilliant blue skies. No matter that the story is improbable—given the technology, there is no way that Vincent could have pulled off his deception, nor could his imperfect body have stood up to the intense training he was forced to endure—it works in the service of larger issues. Vincent's dream of transcending his bodily limitations is a metaphor for humanity's dream of breaking the bonds of earth's boundaries.

Thus, *Gattaca* brings an ironic twist to an enduring motif in science fiction films. As historian David J. Skal has pointed out, physical disability has long played a vital role in the yearnings and questing of the mangled and afflicted mad scientists, from *Metropolis* to *Dr. Strangelove*. They believed the next step in human evolution would be a human perfection, one that would lead ultimately to the shedding of human flesh altogether. *Gattaca*, by contrast, locates human perfectibility not in technological perfection but in the spiritual rebellion against science and rationality

See also: Science and Politics in Film; Science Fiction Film, The

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—John C. Tibbetts

GENERAL, THE. *The General* (1927) is one of Buster Keaton's masterpieces. Keaton, a true renaissance man of the early cinema—he wrote, directed, edited, produced, and acted in films—made dozens of pictures during a career that spanned almost 50 years. Along with Harold Lloyd and Charlie Chaplin, Keaton helped to shaped the figure of the antihero in motion pictures—the bumbling, unwitting, childishly charming savior of the day. Many have argued that *The General* is a nearly perfect film, with its physical comedy seamlessly interwoven into the picture's overarching narrative structure.

The General is based on a real event: On April 12, 1862, in the midst of the Civil War, a group of Union Army spies, led by James J. Andrews, stole a locomotive named *The General* in Big Shanty (now Kennesaw), Georgia, while the crew and passengers were having breakfast in a nearby hotel. Andrews and his men drove the train north toward Chattanooga, Tennessee, doing as much damage to the Western and Atlantic Railroad lines as possible—tearing up track, sabotaging switches, and burning bridges. They were eventually caught before reaching their destination and later executed.

Keaton and his longtime writing partner Clyde Bruckman (who received both writer and director credits for the film) were inspired by the exploits of William Allen Fuller, the real-life conductor of *The General*, who pursued his stolen train on foot, by handcar, and on three other trains, picking up Confederate troops along the way. Keaton's film, which privileges comedy and romance over historical accuracy, tells the story of Johnnie Gray (Keaton), who, as an early title card announces, loves both his engine and the lovely Annabelle Lee (Marion Mack). When the citizens of Marietta, Georgia, learn that Fort Sumter has been fired upon—the event that initiated the Civil War—Annabelle's father (Charles Henry Smith) and brother (Frank Barnes) immediately join the Confederate Army; Johnnie, though, is turned away because his work is more important to the Southern cause, leaving Annabelle and her family thinking he is a coward.

Johnnie finally has a chance to prove himself a year later when the Yankee spies steal his train. He does not know Annabelle is onboard. On her way to visit her wounded father, she returns to the train looking for something she has left behind and is captured by the enemy. Johnnie chases on foot and by handcar, bicycle, and train, accidentally uncoupling the cars carrying Confederate soldiers. He makes his way into enemy territory, poses as a soldier, rescues Annabelle, and steals another train to head home and warn of the impending Yankee attack. Johnnie eventually is declared a hero, made a lieutenant, and embraced by his sweetheart.

Although retaining the broad historical brushstrokes of the actual event, in *The General* Keaton and Bruckman exploit each fateful turn of Johnnie's experience for the sake of slapstick. One of the most physically gifted actors in film history, Keaton gives Johnnie several inspired bits of business during the train chase. For instance, Johnnie hooks a small car carrying a cannon to *The Texas*, the train with which he has absconded; when he lights the fuse, the cannon tilts precariously until it is aiming at the engine car. When he tries again, his foot accidentally catches in the coupling, and he inadvertently fires the cannon at Yankee troops as the train careens around a curve. Keaton also found opportunities to give expression to a different, romantic type of humor. After Johnnie rescues Annabelle and *The General*, the train quickly runs low on firewood. Annabelle, failing to understand the seriousness of their predicament, throws away a piece of wood simply because it has a hole in it. When she tosses twigs into the engine's burner, Johnnie can stand it no longer; grabbing her, he suddenly begins to choke the surprised Annabelle. Just as suddenly, however, Johnnie turns the assault into a wonderfully romantic kiss, providing audiences with one of cinema's most iconic moments.

The most elaborate stunt comes when Johnnie sets a wooden bridge on fire, and *The Texas*, with the Yankees in pursuit, plunges into the river below. Rather than

employ miniatures, Keaton used a real train tumbling off a real bridge, making the \$42,000 stunt the most expensive in Hollywood history to that point. The director's perfectionism and the cost of shooting on location in Cottage Grove, Oregon, which still had the essential narrow-gauge railroad tracks in place, drove the film's budget to a then-astronomical \$760,000. When audiences failed to respond to *The General*, Keaton's career went into a tailspin, and his descent into alcoholism became increasingly problematic.

By the 1950s, critics and audiences had rediscovered *The General*, and since that time it has appeared on many lists of the greatest films ever made. Despite the slapstick, it has also been noted as an unusually realistic portrayal of the Civil War. Orson Welles, among others, compared Keaton's images to those in the Civil War photographs produced by Mathew Brady.

See also: Keaton, Buster; Silent Era, The

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—Michael Adams

GENTLEMEN PREFER BLONDES. Directed by Howard Hawks, *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* featured Marilyn Monroe in the lead role as "Lorelei Lee." One of the films that established Monroe as perhaps the screen's most famous "blonde bombshell," the 1953 musical was a film adaptation of the 1925 novel by Anita Loos, which had already been made into a silent picture in 1928. Lorelei is a gold-digger, whose single goal is to marry the richest man she can find. The film begins with a scene in which a huge diamond engagement ring is presented to Lorelei by Gus Esmond Jr. (Tommy Noonan), who is under the spell of his powerful "Daddy" (Taylor Holmes). Lorelei concocts a scheme to get Gus to Europe, where, far from the clutches of Gus's father, they can be married in peace. In order to carry out her plan, Lorelei enlists the help of her girlfriend, "Dorothy Shaw" (Jane Russell), whose main responsibility seems to be to keep Lorelei out of trouble, a task that proves nearly impossible to fulfill. The story ends happily, with Lorelei winning over Daddy with displays of her uniquely charming logic: "I don't want to marry your son for his money, I want to marry him for *your* money."

The film suffers from a somewhat predictable plot—the gorgeous blonde, seemingly without a brain in her head but cunning enough to capture her man, and her brunette sidekick, girls "from the wrong side of the tracks," who are successful because of Lorelei's stunning good looks and Dorothy's skill in navigating difficult situations—the film was still a crowd-pleaser. Featuring wonderfully choreographed musical

numbers, the picture allowed Monroe and Russell to demonstrate how truly multitalented they actually were. Russell treated audiences to a comic-poignant rendition of “Is There Anyone Here for Love?” while dancing among a team of muscular, almost effeminate-looking Olympic-style athletes who wear nothing but skin-tight, flesh-colored shorts; while Monroe wowed viewers with her iconic performance of “Diamonds Are a Girl’s Best Friend,” sung as she moved seductively among dozens of tuxedo-clad gentlemen.

Reflecting the cultural sensibilities of the times, the picture concludes with a double wedding on the return trip to the United States, allowing Lorelei and Dorothy jointly to enter into the safe haven of marriage. Displaying their diamonds—Lorelei’s so large it borders on the crass, Dorothy’s so small it almost disappears—the scene seems to be saying that happiness is intimately connected to wealth. Lorelei’s ring reflects her decision to marry for money, Dorothy’s her decision to marry for love.

Interestingly, while some feminist films critics (Turim, 1990) understand *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* as yet another text that commodifies women—in this case, trading on their looks or their feminine wiles while they bargain themselves away in exchange for the security of diamonds—others (Arbuthnot and Seneca, 1990) claim that Lorelei’s “logic,” because it enables her to mark out a position of power within the economic space defined by a male-dominated system of market exchange, allows the film’s female protagonists to act together, as collaborators instead of as competitors; as what Luce Irigaray calls “this sex which is not one” (Irigaray, 1985). The women, then, become the film’s narrative focus, while the men are pushed out onto the margins, becoming no more than eye candy, good for gazing at but easily discarded when the women have had their fill.

See also: Feminist Film Criticism; Hawks, Howard; Male Gaze, The



Actress Marilyn Monroe performs the musical number “Diamonds Are a Girl’s Best Friend,” from director Howard Hawks’s film *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, 1953. (Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

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—Karen A. Ritzenhoff

GIANT. Based on Edna Ferber's 1952 novel, George Stevens's *Giant* (1956) is a sprawling epic marked by grand themes, a vast Texas landscape, and a years-to-tell narrative. Although there are a number of important elements woven through this densely layered film—children wanting to live their own lives instead of the lives their parents want for them, the struggles of a new wife trying to adapt to the complex relational dynamics that characterize her new husband's family, the contrasts between the gentrified East and the rough and tumble West, the decline of cowboys and cattlemen and the rise of oil barons—it is the theme of prejudice that is at the heart of this sweeping melodrama.

Although *Giant* touches on the issue of gender bias—Leslie Benedict (Elizabeth Taylor) is made to understand in no uncertain terms that women are not welcome to join men when the latter are discussing politics—the film focuses on the problem of racial intolerance. Within the film's first few minutes, for instance, Leslie, new wife to the wealthy landowner Bick Benedict (Rock Hudson), realizes that socializing with Mexican Americans who serve as laborers and house servants breaks existing taboos against racial intermingling. The Mexican American infant of a house servant that Leslie helps by insisting he be visited by a local doctor, grows to manhood, joins the military as World War II begins, and is one of the town's first casualties. At his graveside, as the flag covering the coffin is given to the grieving mother, an officer offers her a touching sentiment: "I am proud to present to you the flag of our nation which your son defended so gallantly." Bick—along with Leslie the only non-Hispanic mourners present—then hands the members of the family a neatly folded Texas flag. The scene ends with a rendition of the Star Spangled Banner, sung by Mexican American altar boys, with the American and Texas flags blowing in the Texas wind, silhouetted by a billowy Texas sky. As the anthem continues, the scene changes to the arrival of the Benedicts' first grandchild by their daughter, followed by a second scene of the arrival of a second grandchild by their son's Mexican American wife. This close shot of the two babies, one very white and the other very Hispanic, is repeated in the last scene, where they both, now toddlers, share a playpen, their commonality dominating their differences.

While the storyline of *Giant* seems somewhat dated, its continuing strength lies in the look of the film, especially in Stevens's ability to craft individual scenes that seem to work as well alone as they do when they are joined together into a whole.

Interestingly, Stevens was a cameraman before becoming a director, and some of *Giant's* most powerful images—the burial of a Mexican American soldier under a U.S. flag and a bright blue Texas sky; a drunken, dream-shattered oil tycoon broken in front of those whose admiration he seeks; a café scene that so powerfully captures the ugliness of prejudice it inspired a book-length poem—are as moving today as they were to audiences back in 1956.

Stevens initially wanted Grace Kelly to play Leslie Benedict, but supported Hudson's wish that Taylor should play the role. Already a household name after star turns in *East of Eden* and *Rebel Without a Cause*, both of which had been released in 1955, James Dean was cast as the brooding, self-destructive ranch-hand turned oil tycoon, Jett Rink, a role that earned him an Oscar nomination. Dean had a difficult working relationship with many members of the cast, however, most notably with Stevens and Hudson. Stevens had tried to push Dean beyond what he had learned in acting school, but Dean bristled at his direction and created continual problems on the set by arriving late and once even urinating in front of all present. Taylor was one of the only members of the production who was close to Dean, suggesting that most of the young superstar's problems grew out of his insecurities. Unfortunately, shortly after filming for *Giant* was completed, Dean was killed in a head-on collision as he drove his Porsche 550 Spyder back to California. Even though he had made only three feature films before his untimely death, Dean became one of Hollywood's iconic figures.

Released just two years after the Supreme Court's landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision was handed down, and one year after Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus, was arrested, and helped initiate the Montgomery Bus Boycott, there were those in Texas who thought that distributors should not release *Giant* in their state. As it turned out, though, Texans were, for the most part, proud of their portrayal in the film. As Stevens suggested, they were not simply caricatures of one-dimensional racists, but exhibited complex and evolving reactions to their changing world.

See also: Melodrama, The; Taylor, Elizabeth

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—Rick Lilla

GLADIATOR. *Gladiator* (2000), directed by Ridley Scott and written by David Franzoni, revived the genre of the epic film after a hiatus of over 30 years. At a production cost of \$103 million, the highest ever for the then-new DreamWorks Studio, *Gladiator* went on to gross over \$400 million worldwide. It was nominated in 2001 for 12 Oscars, winning five—Best Picture, Best Actor (Russell Crowe), Best Costume Design, Best Sound, and Best Visual Effects.



Scene from the 2000 film *Gladiator*, directed by Ridley Scott and starring Russell Crowe. (Photofest)

Gladiator offers up a grand spectacle—bloody battles, elaborate costumes, and the proverbial cast of thousands. The film centers around the relationship between Roman General Maximus (Crowe) and Emperor Marcus Aurelius (Richard Harris) and the Emperor’s son and daughter—Commodus (Joaquin Phoenix) and Lucilla (Connie Nielsen). After winning a battle against the barbarians, the Emperor asks Maximus to become “Protector of Rome” upon the Emperor’s death. This request comes despite the fact that Maximus longs to return home to his own family, and Commodus, Maximus’s rival, is the true heir to the throne. Commodus soon murders his father and attempts to kill Maximus, who escapes only to find his family murdered. Maximus is captured by slave traders and then sold as a gladiator. At first reluctant, Maximus becomes a willing participant in the gladiatorial fights and eventually finds vengeance, as well as his own death, at the Coliseum.

Costume is used to transition the characters in *Gladiator* through their relationships and the narrative. This is especially true for Lucilla, daughter to Emperor Marcus Aurelius. Upon her father’s death, Lucilla returns to Rome with her brother Commodus. Lucilla’s wardrobe changes to reflect their uneasy relationship, which is based on her fear and his threat of sexual violence. Early in the movie, in happier times, Lucilla is seen in rich and luxurious furs. As the movie progresses, she is gradually tightly wrapped in vibrant color and texture. As she becomes less able to extricate herself from her brother’s grip, her clothing becomes simple and ties are used to restrain and envelop her, tightly bound behind her shoulders and cinched securely around her body. This is apparent in each of the scenes between Lucilla and Commodus, effectively symbolizing the “house arrest” from which she cannot escape.

Throughout the film, costume is also significant in expressing the experiences of other characters. About to be murdered by Commodus, the Emperor approaches his son on his knees, dressed in loose white clothing reminiscent of burial shrouds. He seems to offer himself to Commodus as if asking for final forgiveness. When Commodus challenges Maximus in the Coliseum, the Emperor's son is dressed in white including his armor and cloak. Again, the symbolism here is death, as Maximus kills Commodus.

In the words of Ridley Scott, the character of Maximus has "a great deal of humanity." Maximus is a charismatic leader, strong and purposeful in battle, and loyal to the Emperor, his leader and father-figure. There are other sides to this epic hero: Maximus is sensitive, a tough family man, at home in battle or on the farm. He prays to his ancestors to keep his family safe and carries their effigies with him. Before each battle or gladiatorial fight, he bends down to scoop up a handful of soil, smelling it, rubbing it into his hands, taking strength from the earth and reminding himself of his life as a farmer. From the opening scene where we see a hand gently stroking stalks of wheat in a wind-blown field, we realize that Maximus's vision of his own death has brought the viewer through the movie. At the end of the film, with his death, a door opens to bring him back home, once again united with his family, and finally granted the rest from battle for which he has longed.

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—Vicky Bach

GLORY. Edward Zwick's 1989 film *Glory* presents a stirring account of bravery and the challenge of racial integration during the U.S. Civil War. It depicts the development, formation, and courage displayed by the members of the 54th Massachusetts, an all-black regiment utilized by the Union forces during the war.

The film follows Robert Gould Shaw (Matthew Broderick), the son of prominent Boston abolitionists (an historical figure, some of whose letters are archived at Harvard), who was committed to the Union effort and served at Antietam in 1862. The film depicts Shaw as behaving less than heroically during that terrible battle. Surviving the battle, he is asked to take command of the 54th; although hesitant, he agrees to the assignment. The black soldiers in Shaw's unit are a diverse group, made up of a majority of illiterate former slaves and a small number of well-educated, free blacks from the North. The film focuses on the experiences of an older former slave, John Rawlins (Morgan Freeman); a young, recently escaped slave, Trip (Denzel

Washington); a young free black from Tennessee, Jupiter Sharts (Jihmi Kennedy); and a well-educated free black, Thomas Searles (Andre Braugher). Essential to the dynamic flow of the film is the depiction of the relationships that develop between free blacks and former slaves.

After training has commenced, Shaw learns that the Confederacy has announced that any former slave wearing a Union uniform will be summarily executed; the same goes for whites leading black soldiers. Even though an offer is made to grant discharges, and Shaw fully expects half the regiment to leave, not one man abandon's the unit. Shaw's men are paid less than white soldiers and are deprived of many necessities; and it also appears they will never see military action, as they are used only in auxiliary roles.

In the summer of 1863, however, Shaw leads the 54th south, believing that he and his men will finally see action against Confederate forces. Instead, the unit is placed under the command of an officer who shows proper respect for neither the black soldiers nor the customs of war. Thereafter, Shaw's men are only used for manual labor. Only after Shaw threatens to expose his corrupt superior is the regiment given an opportunity to fight. The 54th then bravely participates in the Battle of Sol Legare Island. After their success at Sol Legare, Shaw volunteers his unit to lead the charge at the Battle of Fort Wagner. In stark contrast to his actions at Antietam, Shaw bravely leads his men into battle, dying in the process. Dispelling the idea that black soldiers are not capable of fighting the good fight, the members of the 54th battle courageously, a great number of them losing their lives at Fort Wagner. In one of the film's most poignant scenes, Shaw is shown being buried with his troops in a mass grave.

Many American films have sought to depict the haunting stain of racial prejudice that marks the fabric of the nation's past, but few have done it more effectively than *Glory*. Admittedly, the film was criticized for its liberal use of artistic license in its depiction of the Civil War and the participation of black troops in the conflict. The film implies, for instance, that the 54th Massachusetts was the first all-black regiment, which it was not; Shaw was also not the man he was portrayed to be, as his letters reveal him to be more of a racist than he appears to be in the film—while he is offered and accepts the command of the all-black unit on the same day in *Glory*, he actually resisted taking the position until his family pressured him into agreeing to lead the regiment; and although the majority of the soldiers in the filmic 54th were portrayed as being former slaves who had escaped from Confederate states, most were actually free blacks from the North. The list goes on, but perhaps in the end this is not what is most important about *Glory*. Rather, because the film “promises to rescue for the large public that goes to the movies an almost lost lesson in American history,” it has much to teach us about race in America, both during the time of “this great Civil War” and as we continue to struggle with this issue today (Bernstein, 1989).

See also: African Americans in Film; Ethnic and Immigrant Culture Filmmaking; War Film, The; Washington, Denzel

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—Michael L. Coulter

GODFATHER TRILOGY, THE. *The Godfather* trilogy, directed by Francis Ford Coppola, follows the story of three generations of the Corleone crime family. The pictures include *The Godfather* (1972), *The Godfather Part II* (1972), and *The Godfather Part III* (1990). The original film was based on Mario Puzo’s 1969 best seller of the same name. Although very different from a work like Martin Scorsese’s “gangster film” *Mean Streets*, which was released around the same time, *The Godfather* is considered by many the preeminent cinematic work about organized crime families.

The Godfather opens with the wedding of Don Vito Corleone’s (Marlon Brando) daughter, Connie (Talia Shire), to Carlo (Gianni Russo). Don Vito and his consigliere, Tom Hagen (Robert Duvall), are hearing the requests of friends and associates, as “no Sicilian can refuse a request on his daughter’s wedding day.” One of the guests at the



The cast of the film *The Godfather* pose for a family portrait during a wedding scene in a still from the 1972 film, directed by Francis Ford Coppola and based on the novel by Mario Puzo. (Getty Images)

wedding is Vito's godson, the famous singer (a Frank Sinatra-like figure) Johnny Fontane (Al Martino), who requests that Don Vito help him get a part in a movie in order to revitalize his career. Hagen flies to California to convince studio boss Jack Woltz (John Marley) to give Johnny the part. In a scene that defines the new business-oriented approach of the crime family, when Woltz reacts forcefully to Hagen's request—"Johnny Fontane will never get that movie. I don't care how many dago guinea wop grease ball goombas come out of the woodwork"—Hagen remains perfectly calm—"It's not personal. It's business." Woltz is finally convinced when he awakens to find the head of his prized stud horse in his bed.

Later, Don Vito is asked by Virgil "The Turk" Sollozzo (Al Lettieri) to attend a meeting in order to discuss the possibility of the Corleone family involving itself in heroin trafficking. Demonstrating the oddly perverse set of ethics that characterize the families, Don Vito refuses to get involved with the sordid business of drug trafficking, as it not only may affect his political influence but is ultimately beneath him. As a result of his refusal, an assassination attempt is made on his life. Upon hearing of the near death of his father, Vito's youngest son, Michael (Al Pacino), considered a "civilian" by the other organized crime families, rushes home and finds his father's hospital room unguarded. Michael decides to meet Sollozzo, who ordered the hit, and a New York City policeman at a local restaurant. Returning from the bathroom, where he has retrieved a secreted gun, Michael shoots both of the men, sealing his fate as a member of the Corleone family. Fearing for Michael's life, his brother Sonny (James Caan) sends him to Sicily until things "cool down." Once there he meets a woman, falls in love, marries and begins a life with her, until she is killed by a car bomb. Returning to the United States, Michael reunites with Kay Adams (Diane Keaton), his non-Italian future wife, and begins his ascension toward the position of Godfather.

It may be argued that *The Godfather* is essentially a film about a violent and reprehensible realization of the American Dream. As his biographer, Gene Phillips, suggests, Coppola "wished to show the Italian American community with understanding and candor, to indicate that Don Corleone . . . was convinced that organized crime was the passport to the American Dream for downtrodden immigrants" (Phillips, 2004, 91). In a 1970s America plagued by the lingering conflict in Vietnam, the Watergate scandal, and what Jimmy Carter called the country's "malaise," the possibility of realizing the American Dream appeared to many like an unattainable goal. According to Phillips, then, Michael's seemingly inevitable rise to the position of godfather reflects the sensibilities of a worried nation: in difficult times, people do what they *have* to do in order to protect their families and their interests. Significantly, this notion is related to the unique ethical sensibilities expressed in the *Godfather* films: As long as one's actions, whatever they may be, are carried out "in the name of family," they are appropriate. Coppola expresses this idea in a powerfully disturbing way toward the end of the first film, presenting his viewers with an extraordinary montage sequence during which he intercuts a scene of Michael reciting words of the Catholic baptism ritual, as he becomes godfather to his nephew, with several other scenes in which murders that he has ordered are carried out by his hit men, clearing the way for his final rise to power as Godfather of the family.

The Godfather Part II, which opened on December 12, 1974, is a much darker film than its predecessor. Two narrative lines, out of time, run parallel to each other. The first continues the story of Michael Corleone in the role of the godfather; the second, shown in a series of flashbacks, follows the story of Vito Corleone as a young man (Robert De Niro). Michael's story opens during a First Communion celebration at the family's vacation house in Lake Tahoe, Nevada. Here, Coppola neatly reflects the opening wedding sequence in *The Godfather* and extends the montage sequence of the family at the baptism gathering that he placed at the end of the first film. Late that evening an assassination attempt is made on Michael, and he tells Tom Hagen that he must leave for a while. He entrusts the business affairs of the family to Hagen. He believes that Frank Pentangeli (Michael V. Gazzo), the capo who took over following Peter Clemenza's (Richard Castellano) death, was responsible for the assassination attempt. After listening to his drunk ramblings, Michael comes to understand that it was actually his own brother, Fredo (John Cazale), who betrayed him. Michael tells Fredo, "You are nothing to me now. Not a brother, not a friend, nothing." He instructs Al Neri to have Fredo killed—but only after their mother has died. The film ends with Michael in the Lake Tahoe residence, sitting in contemplative silence.

In the parallel storyline, the rise of Vito Corleone is chronicled. In the first flashback scene, a young boy (Vito) and his mother are at a funeral procession for the young Vito's father, Antonio Andolini, whose death was ordered by the local Mafia chieftain, Don Ciccio (Giuseppe Sillato). During the procession, Vito's older brother, Paolo, is also killed because he swore revenge on the Don. Vito's mother begs Ciccio to let young Vito live and sacrifices her own life so that he may escape. These events are the catalyst for Vito's rise to power, as he returns to Sicily 24 years later to plunge a knife into the heart of the elderly Ciccio.

Initially, Coppola was not interested in shooting a sequel to his award-winning film. However, many critics felt that although *The Godfather* was brilliant, it had been too redemptive, especially in regard to Michael Corleone. Italian Mafia culture, declared critics, had been sentimentalized; a sequel was needed to expose Michael's true character, and by extension, the truly brutal character of gangster culture in general. In the second *Godfather* film, then, Michael is shown desperately trying to hold onto his family, being betrayed by his own brother, and finally deciding that he must destroy the family in order to save it. By the end of *The Godfather Part II*, only Michael and Connie remain of the original Corleone family. Michael is rejected by Kay, the non-Italian outsider who may be the only one who understands the truth about the Corleone family; and even the ethnic traditions that have bound the family together seem to be crumbling—witness the jarring juxtaposition of Coppola's opening "family celebration" sequences in the two films. Thus, what the audience saw with *The Godfather Part II* was a world in transition, where the "romance" of a successful immigrant achieving the American Dream is replaced by the secrecy of lawyers and the onslaught of family betrayal.

The Godfather Part III completes the story of Michael Corleone, now 20 years older, who feels the weight of tremendous guilt brought on by the events of his life, the corrupting power of ambition, the loss of Kay, and the haunting memory of his role in his

brother's murder. In an attempt to right some of his past wrongs (and bring dignity back to the Corleone family), Michael sets up a charity in memory of his father, the Vito Corleone Foundation. At a ceremony for the foundation, Michael is granted the title of Commander of the Order of St. Sebastian, granted by Archbishop Gilday (Donal Donnelly). At a party following the ceremony, Michael has an awkward reunion with Kay, who informs him their son, Anthony (Franc D'Ambrosio) wants to drop out of law school to pursue his passion: opera. Michael initially refuses to support the decision, but eventually acquiesces, and decides to try to encourage his son's ambitions. At the same party, Michael meets his brother Sonny's illegitimate son, Vincent Mancini (Andy Garcia). After witnessing Vincent get into a vicious fight with Joey Zasa (Joe Mantegna), who mockingly calls his uncle a gangster, Michael, moved by his extreme loyalty, agrees to take his nephew under his wing.

At the same time, Michael is becoming more closely involved with Archbishop Gilday and the Church. He agrees to help the Archbishop climb out of debt by transferring \$600 million into the Vatican's bank, to be invested in Immobiliare, an international real estate company. When news of Michael's deal finds its way to the other mafia crime bosses in New York, they want in. Michael gives each of them a generous payoff, leaving Zasa with nothing. Outraged, Zasa storms out of the room and suddenly a rain of machine-gun fire comes down through the ceiling, killing all of the mob bosses, except for Michael and his bodyguard, Al Neri. Vincent, who has begun a romantic relationship with his cousin, Mary (Sofia Coppola), swears revenge on Zasa and kills him during a street fair. Michael is afraid for his daughter's life and, repeating his own exilic moment in *The Godfather*, takes Mary to Sicily for his son's operatic debut. Assassins are sent to the Teatro Massimo to kill Michael, but they end up killing Mary instead. Dying in her father's arms on the grandiose front steps of the opera theater, she calls out Michael's name. The film's final shot is of Michael as an elderly man, seated in a rocking chair in front of his Sicilian villa. In a scene reminiscent of his father's death, an orange drops from Michael's hand as he slumps over in his chair. Unlike his father, however, Michael Corleone dies completely alone.

The Godfather Part III was not well received by fans, who felt that Michael's sudden remorse over his previous transgressions did not "fit" with the other *Godfather* films. Critics also found the film disappointing, suggesting that it simply repeated, and glorified, the systematic violence of *The Godfather* and *The Godfather Part II*. Literary scholar Phoebe Poon argues that while audiences and critics are justified in their criticisms of the third film, there is a great deal about the picture that can help provide insight into Michael's character and the destruction of his family. She argues that, "While the revision of Michael's character may be read as the most disappointing of the film, it may also be seen . . . as the strongest feature, adding an extra dimension to . . . the leader of the Corleones, whose grief . . . identifies us with his sacrifice of moral integrity out of filial love and duty to the family" (Poon, 2006, 67). This notion of unwavering obligation to the family even as the family is being destroyed, says Poon, is a theme that Coppola carried through the entire *Godfather* series.

The Godfather series continues to be a force in American popular culture. It has been released on DVD three separate times, the most recent incarnation entitled

The Godfather-the Coppola Restoration. Released September 23, 2008, this rerelease features high-definition visuals and bonus footage, including new commentaries and interviews. *The Godfather* was released as a PC game in 1991 and became a best-selling console video game in 2006, released for the Xbox and PlayStation 2 with separate versions for the Xbox 360 and Playstation 3 in 2007 (*The Godfather: The Don's Edition*), PlayStation Portable (*The Godfather: Mob Wars*), and the Nintendo Wii (*The Godfather: Blackhand Edition*). The American Film Institute places *The Godfather* as the #1 gangster film of all time with *The Godfather Part II* coming in at #3. The AFI also listed *The Godfather* as the #3 movie on its Top 100 films of the last 100 Years list.

See also: Brando, Marlon; Coppola, Francis Ford; Gangster Film, The; Pacino, Al

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—Jennie Woodard

GOING MY WAY. *Going My Way* won seven Oscars in 1945, including those for Best Picture and Best Actor Bing Crosby, who played Father Charles Patrick Francis O'Malley. Secretly assigned by his bishop to assume the pastorate at financially troubled St. Dominic's parish, "Father Chuck" clashes immediately with the current pastor, the curmudgeonly Father Fitzgibbon (Barry Fitzgerald, who won the Oscar for his supporting role). In a storyline driven by characterization rather than plot, it is the dynamic between these two protagonists that provides the central narrative structure of the film. In the end, Father Fitzgibbon remains in charge of St. Dominic's, but his "old-world" ways have been challenged and, presumably, mitigated by the ministrations of the more modern Fr. O'Malley.

The ambiguity of the movement suggested in the title (*who* is going *whose* way?) points to a reading of the film as a parable of Catholic life in mid-twentieth-century America. After more than a century of suspicion about the social location of what was predominantly an immigrant faith, Catholicism was beginning to emerge into the Protestant-dominated mainstream culture. While second- and third-generation Catholics were obviously more Americanized—and thus less "foreign"—than their immigrant ancestors had been, the larger culture was simultaneously becoming more inclusive toward non-Protestant expressions of faith. Poised on the brink of the Cold

War against “atheistic Communism,” Americans and Catholics were able to identify a common enemy that helped to eliminate old prejudices.

This double movement may be seen in the generational conflict between the older “brick and mortar” style of the immigrant priesthood—represented by Father Fitzgibbon—and the more people-oriented style of Father O’Malley. Clothing symbolizes this distinction in style: Father Fitzgibbon is rarely without his clerical garb, often including his biretta; while Father O’Malley first appears wearing a jaunty straw hat, and, due to an accident, must meet Father Fitzgibbon for the first time while wearing football sweats. While Father Fitzgibbon dreams of new buildings that will serve only to sustain the isolating mentality of the economically declining parish, Father O’Malley transgresses the self-imposed boundaries of the immigrant church through his former associations in the entertainment industry. Indeed, it is Father O’Malley’s songwriting skills, and not Father Fitzgibbon’s fidelity to tradition, that brings the necessary support—both financial and otherwise—to the parish.

In similar ways, the film transgressed some of the boundaries of popular culture that made Catholicism an exotic “Other” in Protestant-dominated America. While Chuck O’Malley was not the first Catholic cleric depicted in American cinema, Crosby’s portrayal of the congenial priest became the face of the Catholic priesthood to most Americans, both Catholic and non-Catholic alike, in the immediate aftermath of World War II. Although priests in cassocks and collars still appeared to be alien and even suspect figures to many Americans, Crosby’s own devout objections to mimicking any sacerdotal activities in the film ironically redefined the role of the priest as liturgically ambiguous—and thus less threatening—to those outside the Roman Catholic Church. Thus, a theologically vague “Crosby Catholicism” took its place as one of the accepted ways of being religious “American style” at the beginning of the postwar religious revival, when phrases such as “In God we trust” and “under God” would make their way into the official American political lexicon.

The popularity of *Going My Way* led writer and director Leo McCarey to produce an immediate sequel, *The Bells of St. Mary’s* (1945), in which Father O’Malley matched wits with a headstrong nun played by Ingrid Bergman. Although the plot was somewhat redundant and the chemistry between the two protagonists less satisfying, the depiction of a children’s nativity pageant made *The Bells of St. Mary’s* the quintessential holiday film of mid-century American Catholicism. By the 1960s, the United States had elected a Catholic as president, and the reforms of the Second Vatican Council encouraged Catholics to embrace such cherished American values as ecumenical cooperation, religious liberty, and the separation of church and state. *Going My Way* presaged these developments, and contributed in its own way to the coming of age of American Catholicism.

See also: Religion and Nationalism in Film

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—Rodger M. Payne

GOLDFINGER. Adapted from the novel of the same name by Ian Fleming, *Goldfinger* (1964) was the third James Bond adventure produced for United Artists by Harry Saltzman and Albert R. "Cubby" Broccoli. It set the pattern for the remainder of the series, introducing plot and visual elements that became staples, and moving away from the (comparative) realism of the first two films toward outright fantasy.

Goldfinger pits Bond—Agent 007 (Sean Connery) of the British secret intelligence service—against the title character: a fabulously wealthy international gold dealer (Gert Frobe) who conspires with agents of the Chinese government to irradiate the contents of the United States Bullion Repository at Fort Knox. The radiation will render the gold unusable for 58 years, creating economic chaos in the West (to the benefit



Villain Auric Goldfinger (Gert Frobe) laughs as British agent James Bond (Sean Connery) lies strapped to a table beneath a laser weapon in a still from the film *Goldfinger*, directed by Guy Hamilton, 1964. (United Artists/Courtesy of Getty Images)

of China) and raising the worldwide price of gold (to the benefit of Goldfinger). Bond foils the plan by seducing Goldfinger's personal pilot, Pussy Galore (Honor Blackman), whose all-female "Flying Circus" is assigned to incapacitate the guards at Fort Knox with nerve gas sprayed from a low-flying aircraft. Persuaded to work against her employer, Pussy replaces the nerve gas with a harmless substitute, enabling the guards to trap Goldfinger's men inside the vault. Bond defeats Goldfinger's lethal Korean henchman, Oddjob (Harold Sakata), in hand-to-hand combat, and a CIA weapons expert disarms the bomb. Bond corners and fights Goldfinger aboard his personal aircraft, which he is forcing Pussy, at gunpoint, to fly to Cuba. A shot from the villain's pistol shatters a window, and the explosive decompression that follows sucks him from the plane and kills him.

Goldfinger was, by the standards of the Bond series, realistic. Its principal villain was motivated by simple greed, not megalomania, and his plan relied on real-world technologies like nuclear weapons and nerve gas. The massive, metal-cutting laser that Goldfinger uses to threaten Bond was a fantasy in 1964, but the laser itself had been tested and patented in 1960. The use of the Chinese as co-conspirators echoed Western anxieties about China becoming the world's third nuclear state—which it did in October 1964, a month after the film's premiere. Goldfinger's "hijacking" of his own airplane to Cuba at the end of the film references a then-new crime that began in 1958 and peaked a decade later. Bond himself is not the superman he would become: He defeats Oddjob through luck and cleverness rather than superhuman fighting skills, and he is unable to disarm the nuclear bomb (a procedure that requires the flipping of a single switch).

The film is remembered, however, not for its realism but for its overtly fantastic elements. Bond makes his first appearance in a diver's dry suit, which he strips off—revealing an immaculate tuxedo—before walking into a fancy party. He drives an Aston-Martin DB5 sports car, specially modified to include rotating license plates, twin forward-firing machine guns, retractable tire-cutters, a smokescreen generator, and an ejector seat. He seduces Jill Masterson (Shirley Eaton), one of Goldfinger's minions, and wakes up to find her dead beside him, her nude body completely coated with gold paint. Oddjob is a master of martial arts, but his signature weapon is a bowler hat with a steel-reinforced rim that he throws like a discus. Finally, there is Pussy Galore, whose censor-baiting name eclipsed Honor Blackman's portrayal of her as (initially) a formidable, multitalented adversary for Bond. Elaborate gadgets, comic-book-style henchmen, and beautiful women with improbable names (Plenty O'Toole, Holly Goodhead, Xenia Onatop) steadily increased in prominence until by the early 1970s they had become defining elements of the franchise.

Other soon-to-be-stock elements also made their first appearance in *Goldfinger*. These include the first request for his signature drink—a "vodka martini, shaken, not stirred"—the first use of a precredit sequence unrelated to the main action, the first to feature "Q" as a code name for the secret service's armorer, and the first of Bond's bantering conversations with him. It was also the first Bond film to feature overt humor as a prominent element. Shirley Bassey's performance of the title song over the credits was the first in a series of such performances by leading pop singers and, like many that followed it, "Goldfinger" became a major hit.

Goldfinger has been repeatedly chosen, by both fans and critics, as one of the best of the James Bond films. In retrospect, this is hardly surprising: the series came to be defined by a pattern from which it seldom ventured far, and *Goldfinger* was the film that set the pattern.

See also: Bond Films, The

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—A. Bowdoin Van Riper

GONE WITH THE WIND. It may be argued that no other film surpasses *Gone with the Wind* (GWTW) as a touchstone of American culture. This is evidenced not just by its remarkable popularity since it premiered in Atlanta, on December 15, 1939, but also by the amount of critical attention and debate it has generated for seven decades. Based on Margaret Mitchell's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel of the same name—the book had clearly captured the imagination of many Depression-era Americans, topping the best-selling list of 1936 with a million copies sold by year's end—the David O. Selznick film was highly anticipated and eventually viewed by millions.

The ill-fated love triangle of Scarlett O'Hara (Vivien Leigh), Ashley Wilkes (Leslie Howard), and Rhett Butler (Clark Gable) is at the center of the lavishly produced Civil War-era epic. Fittingly, the film opens with the O'Hara clan at Tara, the home to which Scarlett is increasingly dedicated; the action quickly moves to a barbeque at the Wilkes plantation, Twelve Oaks, where viewers are introduced, in rapid succession, to Ashley, Rhett, Ashley's fiancée and cousin Melanie Hamilton (Olivia de Havilland) and several other players, including Scarlett's future husbands Charles Hamilton (Melanie's cousin) and Frank Kennedy. Scarlett, a teenager in love with Ashley, learns that rumors of his marriage to Melanie are true, and so impulsively accepts Charles's proposal before he rides off to war. Rhett also meets and falls for Scarlett during the course of the gathering, and continues to pursue her throughout the war years and the subsequent Reconstruction era.

Charles dies early in the war, and Scarlett goes to Atlanta to be with Melanie and her aunt Pittypat while Ashley is fighting for the southern cause. Here the relationships are further developed: Scarlett scandalizes Atlanta matrons when, as a widow, she dances with Rhett at a charity ball; Scarlett again declares her love for Ashley when he appears for a short leave; war comes to Atlanta while Melanie gives birth to Beau; Rhett helps the women escape, but leaves them miles from Tara to join the army and gives Scarlett one of the screen's most famous kisses. On her return to Tara, Scarlett



Vivien Leigh (as Scarlett O'Hara) runs from her stately mansion, Tara, in *Gone with the Wind*. (Photofest)

finds her beloved mother dead and her family in disarray. She becomes head of the household and runs the plantation, before and after Ashley's return at war's end, marrying Frank and moving back to Atlanta to keep all from starvation. Eventually Frank is killed in a raid on Shantytown (in which Scarlett was attacked), and she marries Rhett and gives birth to Bonnie. Tragedies then occur, one after another: Scarlett falls and has a miscarriage, Bonnie dies, as does Melanie. In the end, Scarlett realizes her love for both Melanie and Rhett, but too late. She runs home to tell Rhett she loves him, but he has decided to leave, departing with one of the cinema's most famous lines (in response to Scarlett asking what she will do): "Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn." Scarlett decides to begin anew at Tara, and the film ends on a strong note of optimism.

Clearly Scarlett's "gumption" (Mitchell's word) as she confronts adversity, coupled with her refusal to accept defeat, resonated with viewers of the 1930s—not surprisingly, star-crossed love stories set in the midst of America's watershed moments have always appealed to audiences, before and after *GWTW* was released. Yet, although it was applauded for its performances and technical brilliance—the film garnered 10 Academy Awards, with Gable the only major player not to receive one—*GWTW* had its critics. Ironically, although many fans of Mitchell's novel complained that certain characters and plotlines did not make their way from her book to the big screen, some reviewers suggested that the picture was overly long at nearly four hours. More importantly, though, were the cultural criticisms leveled at the film—at the time of its release

and continuing even today. Reacting to the film's focus on Confederate characters and the apparent celebration of their lives and lifestyle, for instance, leaders of the NAACP were quick to point out the picture's stereotypical portrayals of African Americans; while American Communists, objecting to the story's classism and racism, insisted that the film critic from the socialist magazine the *Daily Worker* pan the picture—when he did not, he was ousted from the Party. Interestingly, some critics rejected the idea that *GWTW* should be considered a cinematic classic, suggesting that unrefined, simple-minded audiences liked the picture only because of its sensual sentimentality—it was little more than a filmic “soap opera,” they complained. This situation was complicated by the fact that the audiences who flocked—and continue to flock—to see the film were largely made up of women. Responding to these suggestions, certain scholars argued that the critics who made them had only revealed their own gender bias and deep-seated suspicion of popularity.

Whatever one may think of *Gone with the Wind*, the film—the phenomenon, one might say—continues to be popular with American audiences. The picture has been rereleased numerous times since 1939, and viewers still fill theaters to see it; fans continue to purchase *GWTW* memorabilia; and three of its lines appear on the American Film Institute's list of 100 greatest quotes, with “Frankly, my dear . . .” ranked number one. Satires abound in print and on-screen—references to the film have even made their way into the storylines of *The Simpsons*, something Margaret Mitchell, it seems, would never have thought possible when she wrote her novel.

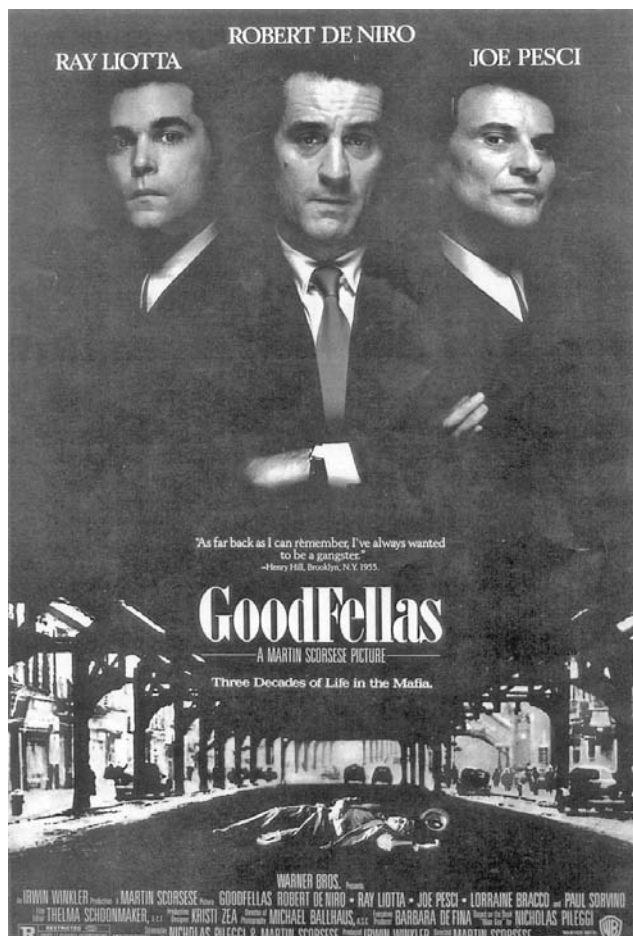
See also: African Americans in Film; Gable, Clark; Melodrama, The

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—Vicki L. Eaklor

GOODFELLAS. Martin Scorsese's *Goodfellas* (1990) was released the same year as Francis Ford Coppola's long-anticipated *The Godfather: Part III*, but it was Scorsese's production that joined the ranks of great American mafia films. The success of *Goodfellas* also created a renewed interest in mob films over the next two decades, probably because the film is graced with subtle, complex, and engaging character studies. Known as an actor's director, Scorsese leads his large ensemble to a string of noteworthy performances. Scorsese had already worked with both Robert De Niro and Joe Pesci in *Raging Bull* (1980), and directs them to memorable performances as gangsters Jimmy Conway and Tommy DeVito. The Scorsese veterans are surrounded by superb



Movie poster for *Goodfellas* starring Ray Liotta, Robert De Niro, and Joe Pesci, directed by Martin Scorsese. (Warner Bros./The Kobal Collection)

actors, including Ray Liotta in the lead role of gangster Henry Hill, Lorraine Bracco as his long-suffering wife Karen, and Paul Sorvino as fatherly mob boss Paul Cicero. De Niro, Pesci, and Bracco were nominated for, and won, various acting awards based on their work in the film, including an Oscar for Pesci as Best Actor in a Supporting Role.

Goodfellas ranks among Scorsese's finest films, and it includes various recognizable components of his directing style: frenetic editing, the use of popular non-diegetic music to underscore the film, naturalistic acting, and an excessively smutty but almost poetic, use of language. These elements work together to tell the thrilling, dark, and conventionally redemptive story of real-life mafia turncoat Henry Hill, who is played with style and panache by both Chris Serrone (as a boy) and Liotta. Scorsese tracks Hill from his first encounters as an errand boy for local mobsters in the 1950s through a series of high points that glorify the exciting life of excess and adventure

that goes along with a life in organized crime. Filmed in the style of a documentary, with multiple voice-over narration segments by Liotta, *Goodfellas* also heartrendingly captures Hill's terrible fall.

Scorsese begins the film in "medias res" as Hill, Conway, and DeVito pull their car off the road to deal with strange noises. The problem is Billy Batts (Frank Vincent), another gangster who has regained consciousness after a beating and has started kicking in the trunk. DeVito and Conway brutally execute Batts, after which Hill closes the trunk and says in a voice-over: "As far back as I can remember I always wanted to be a gangster." This is a shocking line, and Scorsese uses moments like this to show the extreme paradoxes involved in being a gangster. Henry Hill's story then unfolds in a lengthy flashback that shows how he and his crew get to this point. Batts's status as a "made man" is revealed, meaning he is supposedly untouchable by other mobsters.

When the film finally returns to the Batts execution, the new context shows it to be the beginning of a downward spiral for Hill and his crew.

Nicholas Pileggi's book *Wiseguy* is the basis for *Goodfellas*, and both book and film are often praised for their accurate depiction of mafia life. The actors consulted with some of the actual gangsters portrayed in the movie, and the entire enterprise had a veneer of authenticity. *Goodfellas* also appeared to be a celebration of the mafia lifestyle, so much so that the real Henry Hill claimed to be deluged with requests from other mobsters who wanted their story told as his was. Yet *Goodfellas* also examines the dark side of mafia culture, specifically in terms of ethnicity, religion, and race. Hill's Irish and Sicilian "mixed" blood means that he can never be a "made man" like Batts; and his union with Karen is obviously discouraged by their Catholic and Jewish families. DeVito is overtly prejudiced against blacks, while also expressing disbelief that a Jewish woman won't go out with him alone because she is "prejudiced against Italians." Cicero's unified mafia family in *Goodfellas* seems to be a cohesive fraternity that subsumes these characteristics in a code of honor, but events show this to be untrue. In the endgame for Hill's crew this code is shattered by the ruthlessness of mafia life: DeVito is executed for breaking the rules, Conway gets greedy and murders other members of his crew, and Hill turns informant to save his own skin after a drug-related arrest. Membership in the mob does not save any of the characters, and rather than a celebration, Scorsese's *Goodfellas* turns out to be a detailed indictment of mafia culture.

See also: De Niro, Robert; Gangster Film, The; Scorsese, Martin

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—James M. Brandon

GRADUATE, THE. *The Graduate* (1967), Mike Nichols's coming-of-age satire, is thought of today as one of the iconic films of its era. Based on a 1963 novel by Charles Webb, it embodies much of the restlessness and growing alienation of the later 1960s while offering up a shrewdly observed and often bitingly caricatured view of middle-class manners and mores.

Nichols's protagonist, Benjamin Braddock, whose travails lie at the center of this film, bears a striking resemblance to another rebel without a cause of a decade earlier: J. D. Salinger's Holden Caulfield (the adolescent hero of *Catcher in the Rye*). Both characters appear overwhelmed by the "phoniness" of the adult world around them, and both are seemingly set adrift in a society whose hypocritical values they reject, but with one important difference—unlike Holden Caulfield, "Ben" has just graduated, with honors, from a prestigious Eastern college, and is now expected to continue his



Dustin Hoffman looks over the stockinged leg of actress Anne Bancroft, his seductress, in a scene from the 1967 film *The Graduate*. (AP/Wide World Photos)

education with the intent of entering some unnamed profession. Ben's withdrawal into silence and sullenness, and the growing realization that his parents inhabit a "plastic" world of soulless striving, establishes the essential emotional context for the moral and sexual conflicts that follow.

Ben's comic-grotesque affair with a middle-aged friend of the family, Mrs. Robinson, and his pursuit of, and all-consuming love for, her daughter Elaine, quickly occupies the dramatic center of the film, as Ben struggles to understand his attraction to both women and attempts to wrest a happy ending from a seemingly hopeless romantic triangle. Nichols's wildly improbable but dramatically effective resolution of this tangled plot consists of Ben's "rescuing" Elaine from a loveless marriage on her wedding day, culminating in their sudden flight from the church and departure on a bus going nowhere in particular. Our hero is once again set adrift, only this time accompanied by a young woman who is just as lovestruck and confused as he is.

Apart from its antiestablishment attitudes and its relentless ridicule of the suburban bourgeoisie, *The Graduate* achieves cinematic distinction on at least two levels: with extraordinary performances by its key actors and with a visually synchronized soundtrack that provides both context and dramatic continuity to a plot that is often

distractingly episodic. The two principal roles that have drawn most attention are those played by Dustin Hoffman, as Ben Braddock, and Anne Bancroft's Mrs. Robinson. Bancroft was only six years older than Hoffman, but through a combination of makeup and acting craft she manages to convince viewers she is old enough to be his mother and jaded enough not to care. Her seduction scenes are both consummate sex farce and tortured self-revelation, moving what might have been crudely comic into the realm of tragicomedy.

Hoffman's performance is just as memorable in its way, and in retrospect it was a performance that nearly didn't happen. His last-minute casting as Benjamin Braddock has become the stuff of Hollywood legend, as Nichols briefly considered Warren Beatty and Robert Redford (among others) for the role before settling on Hoffman, then a virtual unknown. What Hoffman was able to bring to this role, however, aside from youthful looks, was a quality of awkward ingenuousness that makes him seem younger still: the perfect naïf for a satiric take on the idea of a sentimental education. In passing from innocence to experience and back to a kind of innocence, Hoffman's performance takes us on an interior journey that is credible only because he is able to make Ben seem something more than an anguished and neurotic postadolescent.

Nichols's use of Simon and Garfunkel's folk-rock score is equally inspired, and some of the more memorable moments from this film are those that combine a lyrical image and equally lyrical words in ways that allow one to reinforce the other. One example of this technique can be found in the opening sequence of the film, where Ben is seen on a moving walkway at LAX, obviously isolated emotionally from everything and everyone around him. As the scene unfolds, and the camera pulls back from an initial close-up, we hear the words of Paul Simon's "Sounds of Silence," capturing more perfectly than any monologue could Ben's feelings of dissociation and quiet desperation. Long before a juxtaposition of music and interpretive visual imagery became commonplace in music videos, Nichols orchestrates revelatory moments in the film's narrative that allow Ben—who is largely mute and often inexpressive throughout the film—to speak for himself through a sung voice not his own.

See also: Nichols, Mike

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—Robert Platzner

GRAPES OF WRATH, THE. Director John Ford and executive producer Darryl F. Zanuck adapted John Steinbeck's 1939 novel *The Grapes of Wrath* to the screen in 1940. Henry Fonda starred as Tom Joad, who accompanies his family on a long-distance journey and difficult adventure rooted in the devastation of the Great Depression.

Returning home from a prison stay, Tom finds his family's Oklahoma farm abandoned after a bank foreclosure. Soon reunited, the Joads load their belongings onto a



Still photo from John Ford's classic 1940 film adaptation of *The Grapes of Wrath*. (Library of Congress)

truck and head to California, in search of the plentiful jobs and better living about which they have heard. En route, they meet travelers returning from the Coast who warn that life ahead will be miserable. The Joads' journey takes them through a series of transient camps, each reflecting the poverty and degradation of the era.

The Joads serve, in the novel and in the film, to represent the fate of thousands of American farm families cast out from their homes during the 1930s. As the nation plunged into economic crisis, thousands of farmers found themselves unable to repay the loans they had taken out to finance their operations during the 1920s. Compounding their problems, a drought of epic proportions hit Oklahoma, the Texas panhandle, and beyond. Irresponsible farming techniques had bankrupted the region's land in previous decades. Now, as the overused topsoil blew away into the dust storms that swept the region, farming became impossible. Opportunistic commercial growers on the West Coast lured displaced farmers to the region, promising them employment and housing. But the resulting influx of laborers triggered cycles of lower and lower wages, bringing profit to the landowners and darkening hopes for the workers. Struggling to adapt to life in a new region, such "Okies" often met a chilly reception.

Over the course of the film, Tom becomes intrigued by striking workers and experiences a growing consciousness of his role in the world. As workers begin to form unions and strike, violence mounts. Ultimately, Tom kills a man and must leave his

family to flee the authorities. He declares his goal of fighting for the rights of the oppressed. As he departs, he announces, "I'll be all around in the dark. I'll be everywhere. Wherever you can look, wherever there's a fight so hungry people can eat, I'll be there. Wherever there's a cop beating up a guy, I'll be there. I'll be in the way guys yell when they're mad. I'll be in the way kids laugh when they're hungry and they know supper's ready. And when people are eating the stuff they raise and living in the houses they build, I'll be there, too."

In adapting the plot to the screen, Ford made several significant alterations. Most apparent are the changes made to the ending of the story. In the famous final scene of Steinbeck's novel, daughter Rose of Sharon loses a baby, and then nurses a starving adult male. The scene was deemed inappropriate for use in a mainstream American film. But Ford and Zanuck also softened Steinbeck's political rhetoric, blurring the edges of his defense of accused communists with vague and patriotic-sounding dialogue. The film version also presents a more positive vision of the government-sponsored migrant programs, where the Joads are pleasantly surprised to find clean and orderly facilities.

The film received multiple prestigious award nominations and accolades from film critics. Political conservatives, though, argued that even Ford's rendition of the story remained too favorable toward unions, workers, and Communists. In its romanticization of the Dust Bowl migrants, they argued, the film distorted reality. They insisted that the film's technical strengths and human drama remained compelling only in spite of its political sentiments.

The film was nominated for seven Academy Awards, including Best Picture, Best Actor (Henry Fonda), Best Screenplay (Nunnally Johnson), Best Sound Recording, and Best Film Editing. It won two Academy Awards, Best Director and Best Supporting Actress (Jane Darwell).

See also: Ford, John

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—Ella Howard

GREASE. *Grease* (1978) is an American film musical directed by Randal Kleiser and based on the 1972 musical of the same name by Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey. Among the highest-grossing film musicals, it incorporated several new songs, including its title track, plus rock-and-roll hits from the 1950s. Sometimes described as a rock musical, a



Actors John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John embrace in a promotional still for the film *Grease*, directed by Randal Kleiser, 1978. (Paramount Pictures/Fotos International/Getty Images)

subgenre that originated with *Hair* (1967), *Grease* can also be considered a nostalgia musical that longingly looks back on the 1950s from the midst of the political and economic crises of the 1970s (Everett, 2008).

In 1959, greaser Danny Zuko (John Travolta), leader of the T-Birds, returns to Rydell High School for his senior year following an innocent summer romance. Unbeknownst to him, his summer sweetheart, straight-laced Sandy Olsson (Olivia Newton-John), now attends Rydell. Several of the Pink Ladies gang befriend her, but their leader, Rizzo (Stockard Channing), maliciously engineers a reunion between Danny and Sandy. Surprised to see her, Danny slips out of his greaser persona and greets her enthusiastically before remembering his gang is present. He recomposes his nonchalant facade and mocks Sandy for expressing surprise at his sudden change of attitude. The film then follows the two principals throughout the remainder of the school year as they try to reconcile their differences and develop a relationship.

While its plot is ostensibly about young love, the film explores the personal and social construction of identity and the pressures placed on individuals to conform. Sandy is portrayed as fantastically wholesome: during the animated opening credits, animals help her to dress in a manner reminiscent of *Cinderella* and *Snow White*. Rizzo says Sandy is “too pure to be Pink” and compares her to Doris Day during “Look at Me, I’m Sandra Dee.” At the same time, Danny pressures Sandy to become involved physically, while the Pink Ladies urge her to smoke and drink. Danny is obsessed with being cool and imposes this persona on the impressionable T-Birds, but he is clearly posturing. The contrasting stories that Danny and Sandy tell in “Summer Nights” demonstrate this—his lyrics and gestures are much more sexually suggestive—as do those moments when his tender or pensive sides are visible. The televised National

Bandstand dance, Rizzo's possible pregnancy, and various scenes involving boys and their cars provide further opportunities for characters to posture or reflect on social expectations. (Even Principal McGee's facial expressions reveal that she does not really believe that her students are "fine, bright, clean cut, [and] wholesome.")

Conformity is fully displayed in the concluding graduation carnival sequence. Having embraced each other's expectations, Sandy and Danny finally connect as boyfriend and girlfriend. Altman argues that the reconciliation of gender oppositions is central to the American musical, but these represent deeper oppositions in terms of social values (Altman, 1987). If Sandy stands for those bound by conventional social expectations (the film focuses primarily on sexual behavior) and Danny embodies youthful, rebellious individuality, then their reconciliation suggests that in postwar America, a knowing (if expedient) adult conformity must replace youthful rebellion.

This is ironic: Sandy seems to change more fully than does Danny, but her transformation is primarily a repackaging of her image for her own ends. Some have argued that because of Sandy's new appearance, *Grease* encourages young women to change because their boyfriends are pressured not to date nice girls (Everett, 2008). But the film offers little reason to believe that Sandy has abandoned her wholesome character along with her traditional appearance. Contrarily, Danny's physical modification at the end is far less substantial—he even sheds his letterman sweater after seeing Sandy's more stunning change in clothing—but his personal transformation goes much deeper. Because of Sandy, he lettered in track, and unlike the other T-Birds, he passed all of his classes and is free to spend his summer as he sees fit. Danny has become a man; they are still boys. Furthermore, Sandy dominates Danny in the end as they sing "You're the One That I Want." The camera positions him behind her, or even behind her and lower to the ground. For the majority of the movie, it was Danny who moved most freely through space, as is seen in his triumph in the dance competition, while Sandy fled the frame several times when Danny hurt her feelings. In the end, however, Sandy dominates the physical space, while Danny responds to her. Even lyrics such as "you better shape up, 'cause I need a man, and my heart is set on you" place her in the superior position. Thus the conventional wields greater influence, and much of the rebelliousness proves to be just what we thought, mere posturing.

See also: Coming-of-Age Film, The; Music in Film; Musical, The

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—Stanley C. Pelkey II

GREAT DICTATOR, THE. Premiering on October 15, 1940, before America had entered World War II, Charlie Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* was a milestone in the history of cinema. Already famous for silent films featuring characters such as the Little Tramp, the film marks Chaplin's first foray into "talkies." More importantly, as Nazi Germany's dominance of Europe seemed complete in the fall of 1940, *The Great Dictator* openly mocked Adolf Hitler and his regime and expressed Chaplin's views on the malevolence of military aggression and fascism. Interestingly, many years later, Chaplin would admit that had he realized the true horror of Hitler and his regime, he might not have made a film as farcical as *The Great Dictator*.

Chaplin played dual roles in the film: the innocent Jewish barber and the dictator of Tomania, Adenoid Hynkel, who was modeled after Hitler. Seeking to expose the frightening absurdity of the Nazi dictator's dreams of world domination at a time when many in America were still willing to provide Hitler the benefit of the doubt, Chaplin used his cinematic magic to create scenes like that in which Hynkel dances to the sound of Richard Wagner's *Lohengrin's* theme while holding aloft a globe. As the film's director, Chaplin was also able to elicit brilliant performances from supporting actors such as Jack Oakie as the bombastic dictator of Bacteria, Napoloni



Still photo showing actor Charlie Chaplin in *The Great Dictator* (1940). Chaplin, one of the most instantly recognizable movie icons in the world, was accused of being a communist by Sen. Joseph McCarthy in 1952 and banned from reentering the United States after a trip abroad. Chaplin didn't return to the United States until 1972. (AP/Wide World Photos)

(Mussolini); Henry Daniell as the crafty Minister of Propaganda, Garbitsch (Joseph Goebbels); and Billy Gilbert, as the obese Field Marshall Herring (Hermann Goering).

The film opens in 1918, during the Great War. Chaplin portrays an unnamed Jewish soldier serving in the army of the fictional country of “Tomania.” Injured while attempting to rescue an officer named Shultz (Reginald Gardiner), the soldier, suffering from amnesia, languishes in a hospital for the next 20 years, unaware that Tomania has been taken over by a fascistic dictator, Hynkel, who has instituted an anti-Semitic regime. Released from the hospital, and still suffering from his loss of memory, the former soldier attempts to return to his life as a barber in the Jewish ghetto. Once there, he is shocked to see “Jew” painted on his shop window. Harassed by Hynkel’s storm troopers, the barber is eventually befriended by a beautiful young Jewish girl, Hannah (Paulette Goddard), and finally regains his memory after Shultz recognizes him and talks to him about their WWI experiences.

Meanwhile, Hynkel, who bears a striking resemblance to the barber, is planning the invasion of the neighboring country of Osterlich (Austria). Seeking to fund his invasion by way of a loan from a Jewish financier, Hynkel eases his persecution of the Jews in the barber’s ghetto. When the loan falls through, however, Hynkel renews his persecution of the Jewish people. In a comical switching of identities, Hynkel is mistaken for the Barber and arrested by his own soldiers, while the barber is mistaken for Hynkel and taken to the Tomanian capital in order to make a victory speech before his invading armies. As the camera focuses on the barber, Chaplin suddenly sheds his character and addresses his film audiences directly: “Let us fight to free the world, to do away with national barriers, do away with greed, with hate and intolerance. Let us fight for a world of reason, a world where science and progress will lead to all men’s happiness. Soldiers—in the name of democracy, let us all unite!” Believing this to be the most important scene in the film, Chaplin rewrote the speech numerous times. Ultimately, this final scene took three months to shoot.

The Great Dictator received mixed reviews. Still technically at peace with Hitler’s Germany and clinging desperately to Roosevelt’s isolationist policies, many Americans believed that the film would antagonize the German leader. Others decried what they saw as Chaplin’s attempt to manipulate his viewers politically. Indeed, in areas in the United States with large German populations, such as Chicago, the film was banned; it was also banned in Germany and other pro-Nazi European countries. Even with the controversy that surrounded it, however, *The Great Dictator* became Chaplin’s biggest box-office success. Garnering a slew of Oscar nominations, including one for Best Picture, the film was added to the Library of Congress’s National Film Registry in 1997.

See also: Chaplin, Charlie; Silent Era, The

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—Robert W. Malick

GREAT ESCAPE, THE. Most World War II movies produced before 1963 dealt with battlefront exploits. A handful of films, however, concerned prisoner-of-war camps, and many were British films about the British prisoners. The biggest World War II film about American POWs was Billy Wilder's *Stalag 17* (1953), with William Holden. Oscar-winning epics like *Stalag 17* (1953) and *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957) did little to alter the attitudes of studio executives. The big studios saw no profit in films with an all-male cast set in a German prison camp. MGM's Louis B. Mayer cited the conspicuous absence of women as his reason for not making *The Great Escape*. But when United Artists released *The Great Escape*, it became one of the big box-office hits of 1963 and made Steve McQueen, James Garner, Charles Bronson, and James Coburn into international stars.

The Allied fliers in Luft Stalag III spent far less time digging their way to freedom than director John Sturges did getting *The Great Escape* onto celluloid. Sturges struggled for 11 years to produce Paul Brickhill's autobiographical bestseller *The Great Escape* (1949), an account of the largest Allied prisoner-of-war breakout in World War II. An Australian RAF pilot in Stalag Luft III, Brickhill documented the exodus of 250 British POWs. Brickhill had participated in the two-year long escape plan. He supervised the security personnel that shielded the forgers from the German Luftwaffe



John Leyton, Richard Attenborough, Charles Bronson, and James Donald star in John Sturges's 1963 film *The Great Escape*. The movie, adapted from a book by Paul Brickhill, centers around an actual attempt by Allied soldiers to escape from a German prisoner of war camp during World War II. (United Artists/Photofest)

guards who were tasked with exposing escape attempts. British South African pilot Roger Bushnel, head of the escape committee, envisaged taking out 250 prisoners in an effort to tie up Nazi manpower behind enemy lines. However, only 76 managed to flee before the Germans discovered the breakout. Eventually, three escaped, while the Germans recovered another 23 men. Gestapo agents captured the remaining 50, including Bushnel, and the Gestapo executed the 50 by firing squad. The problem that Sturges encountered when he pitched the idea to various producers, among them Samuel Goldwyn, was the tragic ending. "What the hell kind of escape is this?" Goldwyn bellowed, "Nobody gets away!"

Unlike many POW movies, *The Great Escape* differed because it told an epic story with an ensemble cast of characters who portrayed defiant men who proved with their wits and will that nothing could stop them from accomplishing a virtually impossible task. The Sturges film depicted in detail the elaborate plans that went into excavating three tunnels far beneath the ground in order to avoid sound detection from microphones buried in the earth. The POWs considered every angle of this massive enterprise. Tailors converted uniforms into civilian clothing. Forgers duplicated passes, permits, and identity cards. Not only did tunnels have to be excavated, but the POWs also had to dispose of the soil without arousing suspicion. The engineering feats in constructing these tunnels under the worst conditions, effecting the escape, and tying up German soldiers made *The Great Escape* the apex of all World War II POW movies. Ultimately, the film condemned the barbarism of the Gestapo for murdering the 50 POW escapees and hammered home the necessity for destroying the Third Reich.

"There will be no escapes from this camp," Luftwaffe Colonel Von Luger (Hannes Messemer) announced to Group Captain Ramsey (James Donald), the Senior British Officer in charge as the Germans haul truckloads of British and American POWs into the new Luft Stalag III. "We have, in effect, put all our rotten eggs in one basket and we intend to watch this basket carefully." The British and American fliers locked up in the camp would prove Von Luger wrong. Authentic as *The Great Escape* was, the filmmakers took some liberties with history. Since it was aimed primarily at an American audience, Sturges had to put Americans into the story, when in truth all of the Americans had been transferred before the escape. The biggest change was the highlight of the film when Captain Virgil Hilts (Steve McQueen) made his mad dash for freedom leaping his motorcycle over a barbed-wire fence.

The Great Escape marked the zenith of John Sturges's career. Ironically, despite its military narrative, the film emerged as the most antiauthoritarian big studio film of the day, foreshadowing pictures such as *Cool Hand Luke* (1967), *The Dirty Dozen* (1967), and *Easy Rider* (1969).

See also: Sturges, John; War Film, The

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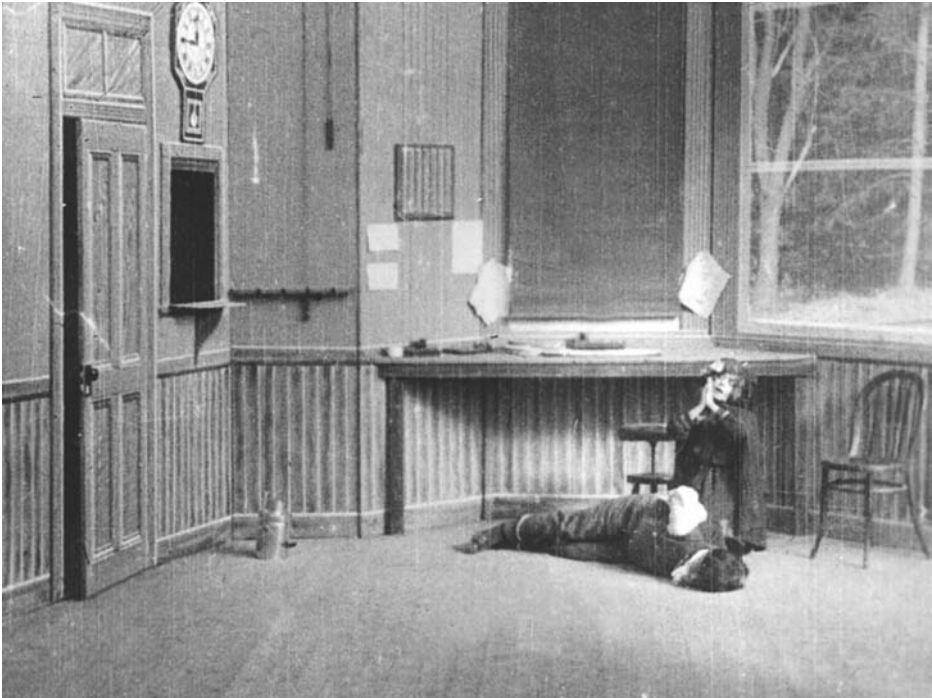
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—Van Roberts

GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY, THE. *The Great Train Robbery* (1903) is a seminal film produced by the Edison Company and directed by Edwin S. Porter. The film is 740 feet in length and runs about 11 minutes—long by 1903 standards. Its 14 scenes depict a gang of ruthless bandits systematically taking over and robbing a train and its passengers before escaping on horseback, only to be hunted down and killed by a posse. An action-chase adventure, it features a fight on top of a moving train, several murders, explosives, and a great deal of gunplay. The final scene (or sometimes the first, depending on the whim of the exhibitor) shows a close-up of the bandit leader raising his gun and firing directly into the camera. Thrilling audiences of the time, it is the film's most famous moment and it has inspired many similar scenes since, including those at the end of Alfred Hitchcock's *Spellbound* (1945), Martin Scorsese's *Goodfellas* (1990), and Ridley Scott's *American Gangster* (2007).

Older film histories often suggest that the film is more original than it actually was, misattributing a number of “firsts” to it. It was not, for example, the first “narrative” film



A woman kneels over the bound and gagged telegraph operator in a scene from *The Great Train Robbery*. Filmed in 1903, the movie is an innovative landmark; the first film western, it set the standard for years to come. (Corbis)

(Georges Méliès's "*Le voyage dans la lune*" [1902] and Porter's own "*The Life of an American Fireman*" [1903] are only two of several important earlier examples), nor was it the first "one-reeler." Even the storyline seems to have been inspired by multiple sources, including a stage play of the same name and several movies, most notably two British imports directed by Frank Mottershaw (*A Daring Daylight Burglary* and *Robbery of the Mail Coach*) released earlier the same year. Ironically, these erroneous "firsts" sometimes obscure the truly remarkable nature of this film, in terms of both its production and its impact on the American film industry. At the time of its release it was one of the most ambitious American films yet made, making use of and popularizing a number of recently pioneered cinematographic techniques. These included matte shots (of a train passing by a window and scenery passing by an open door) and innovative camera positioning (an oblique angle shot, a panning shot, and the shot on the moving train). It was also the first film to use "parallel editing," in which the action moves back in time to follow a different, simultaneous story thread (the scenes in which the telegraph clerk bound and gagged in scene one is discovered and the subsequent assembly of the posse).

Beyond its technical significance, the movie also left other lasting impressions on the American cinema. An early and influential example of the crime drama, it was also (despite being produced in New Jersey) the first important western, spawning countless imitations and launching the career of the first western film star, Broncho Billy Anderson (Max Aronson), who played several roles in the film. Anderson would later parlay his success into the creation of Essanay Studios, one of the major early film production companies. Among the many Hollywood luminaries the film influenced was the future movie mogul Adolph Zukor, a theater operator who credited his careful observations of audience reactions to the film as his inspiration for bringing longer, more action-filled movies to the public. This ultimately led him to found the company that became Paramount Pictures and to hire Porter as his first Director-General.

The first major hit movie in the United States, it also helped to revive an industry that had been flagging as the novelty of early, simpler films had begun to wear off. The introduction of longer-form narrative films in 1902 and 1903 began to reverse this trend, and *The Great Train Robbery*—with its exciting story, constant action, and compelling final scene—attracted crowds of early moviegoers wherever it was shown. It remained the single most popular film in the United States for a decade, and the many other films it inspired expanded and defined the early American cinema.

See also: Western, The

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Actor Sidney Poitier with actors Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn in a still from director Stanley Kramer's film *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*. (Columbia TriStar/Getty Images)

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—Kevin F. Kern

GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER. *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* explores the challenges of interracial marriage in a 1960s America marked by significant racial tensions. Released in 1967 and directed by noted filmmaker Stanley Kramer, the film emerged at a time when African Americans were still struggling to gain their civil, economic, and educational rights in the United States. While these struggles had yielded some positive results, at the time that the film began shooting, interracial marriage was still illegal in 17 states and there was still a significant social taboo against interracial marriage throughout the country in general.

The film's action spans a single day. The opening shots, tonally framed by Billy Hill's uplifting 1936 hit "The Glory of Love," find Dr. John Prentice (Sidney Poitier) and Joanna "Joey" Drayton (Katharine Houghton) working their way through the San Francisco airport and then to the well-appointed home of Joey's parents. The taxi driver's discomfort with the interracial couple portends the action to come.

The couple is met by Joanna's mother, Christina Drayton, played by Katharine Hepburn, who won an Academy Award for her performance in this film. Mrs. Drayton is excited to see her daughter, but shocked to learn that she is now engaged to Dr. Prentice—someone she met in Hawaii just 10 days earlier. Soon, Mr. Matt Drayton arrives. Played by the iconic Spencer Tracy, who died shortly after he shot his last scenes for this picture, Mr. Drayton is also shocked when he hears the news about his daughter and Dr. Prentice. Scheduled to leave on an evening flight, the couple is hopeful that Joey's parents will quickly bestow their blessing on them.

Dr. Prentice, without Joanna present, tells the Draytons that if they object to the marriage, he will not pursue it, as he does not want to cause any conflict between Joey and her parents. Mrs. Drayton soon accepts the inevitability of the marriage, but Mr. Drayton

does not. The Draytons are eventually joined by their friend Monsignor Ryan, who defends the marriage. Also present is Matilda "Tillie" Banks, the African American housekeeper who has been with the family since shortly after Joanna's birth. Tillie criticizes Prentice for what she believes is undue social climbing—for not knowing his place, it seems. The drama only intensifies when Dr. Prentice's parents arrive for dinner. Mr. Prentice and Mr. Drayton are strongly opposed to the marriage, while the mothers recognize that although the union will surely be fraught with difficulties, it will also be filled with love.

There are two important scenes near the end of the film. John Prentice and his father have a heated argument during which the father seeks to convince his son not to go through with the marriage. Dr. Prentice tells his father that although he sees himself only as a "colored man," the doctor sees himself as a "man." Later, after having heard the arguments and comments of his wife, Dr. Prentice's mother, and Monsignor Ryan, all of whom favor the marriage, as well as those of Mr. Prentice and Tillie, both of whom disapprove of it, Mr. Drayton makes a climactic speech about the psychic drama of the day. In the end, he accepts and even encourages the marriage, while acknowledging that the couple will face both explicit and hidden racism because of their marriage. Mr. Drayton even says that Mr. Prentice will come to accept it.

Interestingly, although today the film is remembered by many as a landmark cinematic statement on the racial issues of the time, the picture has often been criticized for presenting audiences with characters lacking any real depth. Dr. Prentice, for instance, seems too perfect—the idealized "negro" who represents no threat to the white world, a charge that, ironically, Poitier also faced; he is a graduate of prestigious colleges, a physician, an important contributor to international health programs and sexually restrained with Joanna. He is also a far too sympathetic character, as he is free to marry Joey only because he lost his wife and son in a tragic accident eight years earlier. Further, the Draytons are depicted as a wealthy, open-minded, nonreligious couple from San Francisco—how could they not support the union?; the priest is portrayed as a kindly, nonjudgmental, liberal-minded member of the modern Catholic clergy; and Tillie is caricatured as the stereotypical "mammy," loyal to her "masters" to the bitter end. Director Stanley Kramer, however, defended the way that the characters were portrayed, explaining that the depiction of Dr. Prentice and the liberal Draytons as near-perfect representatives of enlightened American virtue was necessary in order to allow viewers to focus entirely on the question of interracial marriage—Dr. Prentice had successfully assimilated into the progressive, upper-class white world of the Draytons, and thus the only thing that could possibly be wrong with the marriage was that it would unite a mixed-race couple. And Tillie, even though she has long served as a devoted, intimately related employee of the Draytons, is far from an acquiescent mammy; rather, she acts as a crucial element in the film's social consciousness, expressing to audiences through her quiet strength and dignity that integration is just as difficult for blacks as it is for whites.

See also: African Americans in Film; Hepburn, Katharine; Poitier, Sidney

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—*Michael L. Coulter*

HALLOWEEN. John Carpenter's *Halloween* (1978) launched the slasher subgenre of the horror film. Starring a young Jamie Lee Curtis in her first major film role, *Halloween* made close to \$50 million on a budget of only \$320,000. Its box-office success revealed a new market for horror that would lead to dozens of sequels, remakes, and rip-offs.

Originally entitled *The Babysitter Murders*, *Halloween* was conceived when Irwin Yablans, distributor of Carpenter's *Assault on Precinct 13* (1976), approached Carpenter about making a horror movie for his company, Compass Pictures International. With his partner and producer Debra Hill, Carpenter wrote a script that confined the majority of the action to a small town on a single night.

Halloween starts with a brief tableau, set in Haddonfield, Illinois, on Halloween night, 1963. In a very long take from what is clearly the killer's point of view, we see a young woman get stabbed to death; then a reverse shot reveals a small boy holding a large knife. Following a cut to black, new titles show that it is October 30, 1978. Michael Myers (Tony Moran) escapes from the mental institution where he has been incarcerated since murdering his sister 15 years earlier. A psychiatrist, Dr. Sam Loomis (Donald Pleasance), suspects Myers will return to Haddonfield to kill again. Throughout the following day, Myers stalks Laurie Strode (Curtis), staring at her from outside her school and house. That Halloween night he kills several teenagers while Laurie babysits in a nearby house. When Laurie goes to find out what happened to her friends, Myers attacks, but she manages to escape. She runs back to the house where she is babysitting, tells the children to run and get help, and Myers attacks her again. Finally, after a prolonged struggle, Dr. Loomis arrives and shoots Myers repeatedly until he falls out a second-story window. When Loomis and Laurie look for the body, however, it is gone.

Part of *Halloween's* success stems from its artful blending of classic and contemporaneous influences. Clearly, *Halloween* owes a major debt to Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960). The character of Michael Myers is a psychotic killer with a big knife similar to *Psycho's* Norman Bates. Dr. Loomis is named after Sam Loomis, a character in *Psycho*, and *Halloween's* star, Jamie Lee Curtis, is the daughter of *Psycho's* star, Janet



Actor Tony Moran, as masked killer Michael Myers, wields a knife in a still from the horror film *Halloween*, directed by John Carpenter, 1978. (Fotos International/Courtesy of Getty Images)

Leigh. *Halloween* also draws from popular 1970s horror films like *The Exorcist* (1973) and *The Omen* (1976), which rely on supernatural evil to evoke terror. Dr. Loomis emphasizes this repeatedly when describing Myers as, “purely and simply evil.” In addition, Myers’s survival after multiple gunshots underscores his supernatural power.

While *Halloween* borrowed from classic and contemporary horror, it also introduced many innovations that have since become staples of the slasher film. The teenagers who are murdered in *Halloween* smoke, drink, and, most crucially, engage in premarital sex. Laurie, by contrast, is chaste. She is the paradigmatic “final girl,” the heroine who is virtuous and resourceful enough to defeat the killer. While Carpenter has said he never intended a moralistic reading of the film, many critics interpreted it as a conservative backlash against the loose morality of 1970s youth.

Beyond its narrative innovations, *Halloween* is also a stylistic masterpiece, making extensive use of the Panaglide handheld camera system in long tracking shots. Often, as in the opening tableau, Carpenter uses the Panaglide to suggest the killer’s subjective point of view; but throughout the film the moving camera follows characters, suggesting the presence of an omniscient stalker. In addition, Carpenter’s minimalist score, consisting mainly of piano notes played in a 5/4 time signature, is both memorable and evocative, alerting viewers to Myers’s presence, even when he is unseen.

Along with the many sequels it generated for its own franchise, *Halloween* spawned numerous imitations that share an emphasis on body count, a faceless immortal killer who prefers knives or sharp objects to guns, and strong female characters who fight

back. The film particularly influenced Sean S. Cunningham's *Friday the 13th* (1980), which was specifically made to capitalize on *Halloween's* success. It is also referenced in Wes Craven's *Scream* (1996) where characters watch *Halloween* to learn "the rules" for surviving a horror movie. Because of its cultural significance, the Library of Congress selected *Halloween* for preservation in the United States National Film Registry in 2006.

See also: Horror Film, The; Slasher Films

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—Joseph Christopher Schaub

HAROLD AND MAUDE. Directed by Hal Ashby, *Harold and Maude* (1971) is a dark comedy that is perhaps most notable for a stellar performance by veteran film and Broadway actor Ruth Gordon. Gordon plays the irrepressible Maude, a 79-year-old free spirit who befriends 19-year-old Harold (Bud Cort), helping him to find freedom and meaning in his life. The Colin Higgins screenplay was originally intended to be made as a short for Higgins's master's thesis film, but was purchased by Paramount after Higgins expanded it to feature length. Higgins also wrote a novelization of the screenplay, which was published in 1971. The film was made on a \$1.5 million budget, and was filmed entirely on location in the San Francisco Bay Area. It features a soundtrack by Cat Stevens, which includes two songs written specifically for *Harold and Maude*, "Don't Be Shy" and "If You Want to Sing Out, Sing Out."

At the film's outset, Harold is living a life of wealth and privilege. Alienated from his disengaged yet incongruously controlling mother (Vivian Pickles), Harold apparently has no sense of connection with the society of which he is a part. Obsessed with death, he spends his time staging suicides—self-immolation, *hara kiri*, hanging, drowning—to provoke some reaction from his mother, all to no avail, and attending the funerals of strangers. It is at one such funeral that he meets Maude, whose life-affirming refusal to play by the rules is obvious from the start. Although Harold is at first a bit taken aback by her anarchism, he is also drawn to the freedom that Maude represents. Their friendship develops against the backdrop of Harold's mother's attempts to push Harold into her version of adulthood. These attempts include looking for a wife through a computerized dating service—she fills out the questionnaire—and having his uncle Victor (Charles Tyner) try to persuade him to join the Army. As Harold and Maude grow closer, and as their relationship evolves into a highly unusual romance, Maude introduces Harold to a world of sensuality and joy, simultaneously drawing him away from the living death that his mother's choices for him would entail and toward an authentic life filled with meaning. In one telling sequence, Maude persuades Harold to help her



Scene still from the 1971 comedy *Harold and Maude*, starring Bud Cort and Ruth Gordon. Like other films of the decade, it explored social issues such as gender and age stereotypes, death, and the Vietnam War. (John Springer Collection/Corbis)

“liberate” an ailing city tree and transplant it in a Marin County forest. Unlike Harold, whose fascination with death is boyish and ingenuous, Maude is well acquainted with real suffering—she bears the tattooed number of a concentration-camp survivor on her arm—yet she has chosen life.

Harold and Maude was only Ashby’s second directorial effort, and was one of a number of his films (*Shampoo*, *Coming Home*, *Being There*) in which he explored themes such as free love and antiwar protest that became popular with the 1970s-era counterculture. The film systematically ridicules the “Establishment”—as embodied in the military, law enforcement organizations, religious institutions, and psychotherapy—and offers as an alternative an ethic of choice, joy, and love of life.

Harold and Maude originally received mixed reactions from critics, many of whom—including Roger Ebert and Vincent Canby—saw the film as morbid and grotesque; it also did not impress at the box office. However, Gordon’s and Cort’s performances earned them Golden Globe nominations as Best Actress and Best Actor in a Musical or Comedy Film, respectively, and the American Film Institute ranked the film 45th on its 100 Funniest Movies of All Time list in 2000, and ninth on its Top Ten Romantic Comedies list in 2008. It was also chosen in 1997 for inclusion in the National Film Registry of the Library of Congress. Perhaps most significantly, *Harold and Maude* has

enjoyed a long life as a cinematic cult favorite, and continues to generate interest and comment among new generations of film fans.

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—Judith Poxon

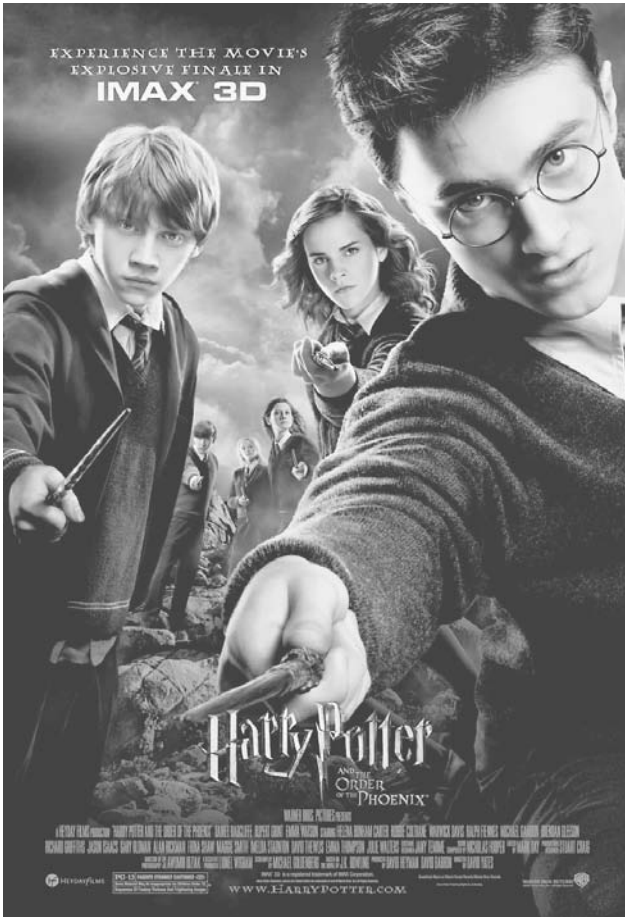
HARRY POTTER SERIES, THE. The *Harry Potter* films, based on J. K. Rowling's series of novels, currently comprise the second-highest-grossing film series of all time, behind the perennially successful James Bond franchise. Rowling sold the filming rights to Warner Bros. in 1999 for a reported one million pounds, stipulating that the cast be kept British and that the films remain as faithful as possible to the books. Rowling has remained both consistently supportive of and involved in the films as they have been released.

Each of the films corresponds to one of the novels: *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (2001); *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (2002); *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (2004); *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (2005); *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (2007); and *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (2009). The exception to this is the final installment, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, which will be released in two feature-length segments, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Parts I & II*.

Though popular primarily for its high entertainment value rather than its intellectual heft, the series posits a complicated view of racial prejudice in the modern world—ultimately offering a critique not only of prejudice and discrimination generally, but also of extremist views on race and equality in contemporary society. Equally important, the movies offer young viewers a world in which their own choices and actions can actively confront and even defeat that prejudice.

The films recount the life of the title character, Harry Potter (Daniel Radcliffe), during his years at Scotland's Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Over the course of the films, as Harry transforms from awkward adolescent to confident, powerful young wizard, he and his companions are embroiled in a war of ethics, race, and class that transforms the very world around them.

From the very beginning, the *Harry Potter* universe is one in which racial difference and subsequent prejudices are the issues around which characters define themselves. Harry, through whose eyes the story is understood, is from the outset defined by issues of prejudice and discrimination. Orphaned as an infant, his "Muggle" (nonmagical) relatives despise him for what they view as his "freakish" differences, and the 11-year-old Harry to whom the audience is first exposed bears the marks of their prejudice: he is malnourished, small for his age, living a life of forced servitude, and has become



Promotional poster for the 2007 film *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*, directed by David Yates based on the popular Harry Potter book series. (Photofest)

accustomed to verbal and physical abuse. Harry is rescued from his veritable prison with the revelation of his Wizarding ancestry. He eventually leaves to attend school, but though at Hogwarts he is at last surrounded by equally magical peers, his world is by no means purged of prejudice. Indeed, it is in the magical world, which provides the films' primary backdrop, that Harry is introduced to the true ugliness of racial and class discrimination.

The Wizarding world, he soon finds, is divided between two kinds of wizards—pure-bloods and those of Muggle descent (derogatorily termed “mudbloods”). Contention over whether the latter should be treated equally in society has twice resulted in devastating war, the more recent of which ended with the death of Harry's parents and his own orphaning. In this, the most recent war, an army of pure-blooded wizards, led by the racist and xenophobic Lord Voldemort (Ralph Fiennes)

(himself hypocritically a half-blood), sought to eradicate Muggle-borns from Wizarding society, and to enslave the nonmagical population of Britain entirely. Voldemort and his “Death Eaters” were nearly successful in achieving their goals, as the Wizarding Ministry's attempts to address their threat through bureaucratic means proved insufficient. Significantly, the most successful counterpoint to Voldemort and the Death Eaters is an underground cabal of individual wizards and witches of various magical and Muggle ancestry led by the Headmaster of Hogwarts, Albus Dumbledore (Richard Harris; Michael Gambon after Harris's death in 2002). Under Dumbledore's command, the mysterious “Order of the Phoenix” worked methodically to undermine Voldemort, eventually securing his temporary defeat, though only at extreme cost to themselves: Harry's parents are killed, the Longbottoms (parents of Neville, Harry's friend) tortured into madness, Sirius Black wrongly imprisoned, and Remus Lupin forced to live a life of poverty.

With the disappearance (assumed death) of Voldemort and the dissipation of his followers, the war is nominally over, and a relieved Wizarding populace returns to the status quo. However, the events of the films make Harry forcibly aware that though the War may have ended, the underlying causes remain, and no amount of willful amnesia about the past can change that reality. In each film, these issues of equality, difference, and discrimination stand out in starker and starker relief, as Voldemort returns (film four), and the Wizarding world moves closer to a second war.

As Voldemort gains power (both before and after his return in *Goblet of Fire*), each of the characters (protagonists and antagonists) are forced to confront the reality of racial difference and prejudice, and to make a choice about where they stand. More than simply emphasizing the importance of the coming conflict to Harry's development, or to the development of the films' narrative arcs, these choices fundamentally inform the lives of the central characters, and through them, the worlds of both wizards and the audience more broadly.

Harry is the most obviously transformed by difference, and his choices are the most central, as the audience experiences the Wizarding world (and its wars) through his point of view. Significantly, he is a protagonist who is literally and figuratively marked by prejudice: aside from the physical and mental damage left by his abusive childhood with the Muggle Dursleys, Harry has been "marked" by Voldemort himself, whose failed attempt to kill him as an infant—driven, Dumbledore explains, by his maniacal hatred of the tolerance for which Harry's parents have fought—leaves Harry with a lightning-bolt shaped scar. The scar is Harry's most oft-mentioned feature, immediately and viscerally identifying him with both Voldemort's racism and his parents' sacrifice to end that racism, and a constant reminder of the importance of his continuing opposition to Voldemort's aims.

Harry's scar, we find out in film five, is conferred to him by Voldemort through the dual strains of destiny and choice. Voldemort is destined to choose his own opposition, and he acts on the information of spy Severus Snape (Alan Rickman) to mark Harry, inadvertently creating his own downfall: "the one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches. . . and the Dark Lord will mark him as his equal, but he will have power the Dark Lord knows not . . . and either must die at the hand of the other for neither can live while the other survives." More so even than the scar itself, the existence of the prophecy marks Harry as Voldemort's opposition, establishing him as the unlikely David to Voldemort's (and, more broadly, racial prejudice's) Goliath.

On the surface, the revelation of the prophecy in film three (*Prisoner of Azkaban*) complicates the series' emphasis on individual choice regarding racial difference, since its existence suggests that Harry opposes Voldemort only because he *must*. However, the films make explicit that Harry is Voldemort's *naturalized* opposition, rather than his *natural* opposite; their upbringing, we see in films four, five, and six, are exceptionally similar—both orphaned and considered freaks for their magical abilities by their caretakers, they are gifted with the unusual (and taboo) ability to speak with snakes, and are summarily shunned. They are both powerful and alternatively envied and resented for that power, which they each abuse at various times in their tenure at Hogwarts. These similarities (which are frequently pointed out to Harry by Voldemort

himself) lead Harry to doubt the purity of his own principles and thus his ability to truly defend them, even in the face of temptation and, eventually, death.

Despite all of this, Harry *chooses* at every turn to maintain the principle of tolerance over the ease and seeming logic of prejudice. His hatred of the Dursley's does not stop him from saving his horrid cousin Dudley's life at the expense of his own school career in *Order of the Phoenix*; the abuse he suffers at the hands of his schoolmates when they believe he is the Heir of Slytherin (*Chamber of Secrets*) and later lying about Voldemort's return (*Order of the Phoenix*, *Goblet of Fire*) does not stop him from risking his life to stop Voldemort from taking over Hogwarts and killing students; his own desire to fit in and be "normal," desires that would be easily granted by accepting the friendship of Draco Malfoy (Tom Felton), does not stop him from recognizing Draco's arrogance and prejudice and befriending the poor and picked-on Ron Weasley (Rupert Grint) and Hermione Granger (Emma Watson), instead; his superior magical ability ultimately does not lead him down the path toward racial superiority—he befriends wizards and beasts whose abilities and species differ from his own, including a house-elf, a half-giant, several Muggle-borns, centaurs, and goblins. Significantly, these decisions are the results of Harry's humanity rather than his magic; it is not his status as Voldemort's equal that governs his life, but his decisions as an *empathetic* human boy that lead him to make what the audience can repeatedly identify as the correct moral choice. As Dumbledore remarks to Harry in films two and four: "It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities"; and these choices are often between "what is right and what is easy." As Harry himself tells Voldemort when he expels the Dark Lord from his mind at the conclusion of *Order of the Phoenix*, "You're the weak one—and you'll never know love or friendship. And I feel sorry for you." Here, Harry identifies the reason for his own inevitable triumph over Voldemort's prejudice not as magic, but as an ability to empathize and love; an ability that transcends the artificial trappings of race or class.

The emphasis on choosing to embrace tolerance and confront prejudice extends beyond the experiences and characterizations of Harry; indeed, for the other major characters on both sides of the ideological divide, these choices are similarly a defining feature, and the barometer by which the audience is encouraged to judge them.

Albus Dumbledore, for example, perhaps the single greatest champion of Muggle rights and general equality in the series, is far from uniformly portrayed, and as the movies progress, his character becomes less and less unambiguously positive. Indeed, Dumbledore's position as "the great liberal" is jeopardized by both his implicit toleration of slavery (the servitude of House Elves at Hogwarts). Similarly, despite his moving speech about the importance of inter-House (and intercultural) unity at the conclusion of *Goblet of Fire*, Dumbledore endorses the continuation of the House system, which characterizes each student by their "traits" and separates them into one of four like-minded communities. Finally, Dumbledore reveals to Harry that it is his own mismanagement of Tom Riddle that led to the rise of his alter ego, Voldemort (and, in the seventh book-cum-movie, he is revealed to have encouraged the developing anti-Muggle ideology of the earlier Dark Wizard, Grindlewald). He is twice-absolved of these sins, first by his death in *Half-Blood Prince*—an ultimate sacrifice

echoing that made by Harry's parents—and by Harry's explicit forgiveness. This forgiveness is symbolic of the shift in moral authority that occurs over the course of the films. Though Dumbledore is the adult, and the original bearer of wisdom, in the end it is Harry, by virtue of his decisions to recognize difference and to incorporate those differences into his definition of equality, rather than to allow them to stand in opposition to it, who has gained moral authority. In the end, while forgiveness is literally granted by Harry to Dumbledore, his redemption transcends any absolution Harry can provide. Dumbledore, too, chooses to let go of his prejudices and to fight first his erstwhile companion Grindlewald, and later his pupil, Voldemort, and thus, despite his many suspect moral choices, remains a positive character on the whole.

On the other side of the war, two characters stand in complicated relationship to racial prejudice as well, but are ultimately “redeemed” in the eyes of the audience by virtue of their choices. The first, Severus Snape, is alternatively the ultimate wrongdoer and Harry's protector throughout the series. At the culmination of film six, Snape kills Dumbledore, rather than letting Draco Malfoy do it, but in *Deathly Hallows*, he is entirely redeemed by Harry, and the viewer, as it is revealed that he did so on Dumbledore's orders. In a series of memories and overheard conversations, it is further revealed that Snape, out of love for Harry's “Muggleborn” mother, Lily, has made the conscious choice to turn away from the prejudiced views of Voldemort and his followers. Not only does Snape change sides, but he also frequently puts his life in danger to save Harry and the rest of the students, several times upsetting the plans of Voldemort's (true) followers. Finally, Snape's death makes him a martyr, and for his sacrifice, he receives the ultimate honor from Harry—Harry gives his name to his second son, Albus Severus.

Another “dark” character, Draco Malfoy, Harry's childhood rival and son of Voldemort's right hand, Lucius is the first character in the books to introduce the term “Mudblood,” and he is characterized as terrible from the start, embracing both racist and classist ideology. Moreover, in *Half-Blood Prince*, Malfoy is ordered by Voldemort to kill Dumbledore, a task before which he displays doubt, and in a series of moments chronicling his preparation for this task, we see not a cold-blooded killer or a staunch believer in racist principles, but a scared young man who, Dumbledore reminds Harry and the audience, is, after all, still a boy.

The responsibility and importance of choice in Harry Potter falls equally on the shoulders of adults and children—a significant and deliberate detail, given the films' largely young audience and its simultaneously fantastic and realistic settings. Ultimately, the choices to embrace difference and work toward tolerance even in the face of seemingly impossible opposition made by various characters encourage viewers to acknowledge the necessity of acknowledging difference and working to move beyond intolerance in their own world, regardless of their age, and even without the aid of magic.

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—Caitlin Gallogly

HEAVEN'S GATE. In the spring of 1892, Wyoming witnessed a violent standoff between rival groups of homestead settlers and hired gunmen. Known as the Johnson County War, the incident was one of dozens of western range wars that pitted independent ranchers and small property owners against wealthy cattle owners. Such range wars have long been a staple of Hollywood westerns, and the Johnson County War has been a particularly popular subject. Michael Cimino's *Heaven's Gate* (1980) is a provocative retelling of that event, and its infamous production debacle ultimately changed the way Hollywood studios would operate.

Heaven's Gate was the third major Hollywood film loosely based on the Johnson County War. In that legendary conflict, homesteaders and small cattle operators were targeted as "rustlers" by large stockowners affiliated with the Wyoming Stock Growers Association (WSGA). The politically powerful WSGA, whose profits were threatened by overproduction and competition from homesteaders, was implicated in the killings of James Averill and Ellen Watson (a.k.a. Ella Watson) and later hired armed vigilantes to hunt down alleged rustlers. The settlers fought back in two violent clashes that killed four people before the U.S. Cavalry intervened and negotiated a surrender.

The Johnson County War was first immortalized in Owen Wister's 1902 novel *The Virginian*. In this account and subsequent film versions, the Virginian hero is a hired hand of the cattlemen who hunts down the rustler villain and tames the West for civilization. In 1953, *Shane* revisited the conflict but cast Alan Ladd as a gun-toting drifter who defends the beleaguered Wyoming homesteaders from greedy cattle barons. *Heaven's Gate* perpetuates this neopopulist view, but with a new twist. In Cimino's hands, the homesteaders are transformed into impoverished Eastern European immigrants who unwittingly settle on Wyoming rangelands controlled by wealthy British and American cattlemen. Viewing the immigrant homesteaders as "thieves, rustlers and anarchists," the cattle association launches an invasion that is aided and abetted by the U.S. Cavalry at every step. The U.S. government is thus complicit in the capitalist takeover of the West, and the plight of the homesteaders is aggravated by their identity as racial outsiders in an Anglo-controlled region. In reality, however, the immigrant dimension is fictional, as is the vaunted love triangle among Nate Champion, Averill, and Watson (the latter two were actually lynched in 1889—two years before the vigilante action). Moreover, the ultraviolent battle scene at the TA Ranch vastly exaggerates what was actually a three-day standoff with only two casualties.

Heaven's Gate can be seen as a post-1960s allegory of western conquest, a fictional story that anticipated many themes of the New Western History that was emerging in the 1980s—racial and ethnic tensions, class conflict, and the vital role of women.

Condemning the capitalist exploitation of the West, the film highlighted the racial and class conflicts that fueled the range wars and other battles over western lands and resources. Reflecting the new feminist sensibilities of the 1970s, the film also offered women more instrumental roles, with Ella Watson and other frontier women brandishing rifles and fighting alongside the men.

Ultimately, the film's convoluted plot and disastrous production made it a colossal cinematic flop. Cimino—flush from his success with *The Deer Hunter* (1978)—had insisted on dramatic scenery (filming was done in Kalispell, Montana, and Glacier National Park), elaborate sets, and complex crowd and battle scenes that resulted in unprecedented time and cost overruns. The initial release ran more than three-and-a-half hours and cost a record \$40 million, more than three times its approved budget. When the film opened, it was savaged by the critics and closed after only a week. A shorter version released a few months later did not fare much better. The financial debacle for United Artists forced its sale to MGM and brought about stricter studio control over directors and their budgets. The violent battle scene and accompanying abuse of horses and other animals also stirred complaints by film crew members and a protest by the American Humane Society. Thereafter, it would become standard practice to have all films monitored by the Humane Society to ensure that no animals were harmed during production. Finally, the disastrous experience of *Heaven's Gate* was a death knell to the already anemic western genre, which declined steadily until a mini-revival in the 1990s.

See also: Western, The

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—Marilynn S. Johnson

HIGH NOON. Fred Zinneman's *High Noon* (1952) is considered by many to be one of the most important westerns in American film history. It has been included in the National Film Registry by the Library of Congress and placed on several "best films" lists issued by the American Film Institute. Although it would go on to become an iconic American western, however, the picture proved controversial when it was released in 1952, as it was caught up in the Cold War politics of the day. Indeed, director Howard Hawks, who would make *Rio Bravo* as both a filmic and political response to *High Noon*, claimed that Zinneman's film, with its screenplay by Carl Foreman, was nothing more than an "unpatriotic," cinematic attack on the HUAC hearings and the blacklisting of members of the Hollywood community, one of whom was Foreman.



Promotional image for the 1952 film *High Noon*, directed by Fred Zinnemann. Pictured are (from left) Katy Jurado, Grace Kelly, Gary Cooper, and Lloyd Bridges. (Photofest)

Unusual for its time, the film's narrative is bounded both temporally and spatially, unfolding over a few hours in the fictional town of Hadleyville. Although ostensibly an "action movie," the film is really more of a character study, as its story revolves around the existential struggle engaged in by Sheriff Will Kane, played by Gary Cooper. As the picture opens, we find a contented Kane readying himself for retirement and a peaceful domestic life with the beautiful Amy (Grace Kelly), a Quaker pacifist. Just before leaving town, however, he learns that Frank Miller (Ian MacDonald), a murderer whom Kane had previously arrested and who has been rotting away in jail, is returning to town in order to exact his revenge.

Convinced that he has already fulfilled his responsibilities as Hadleyville's Sheriff, Kane heads out of town before Miller arrives. His powerful sense of duty gets the better of him, however, and he returns to Hadleyville in order to fight the good fight. Assuming that his fellow townspeople will rally to the cause of defending their home, Kane sets about gathering together a group of deputies. Much to his dismay, he discovers that his faith in the community has been misplaced, as man after man refuses to be deputized. Even the man who has actually been serving as his deputy claims that the risk is too great. After listening to his explanation for why he won't fight, Kane simply responds, "Go on home to your kids, Herb."

Agreeing to meet with town leaders to talk about the situation, Kane enters a church where the men are gathered. We quickly learn that although he is righteous, Kane is not a particularly religious man. As the minister steps aside, then, the town leaders convene their meeting, effectively changing the church from sacred space to political civic center. Thanking Kane for his previous work, and acknowledging that the quality of life in Hadleyville has improved dramatically since he became sheriff, the leaders declare that the cost of preserving law and order is now too great, and they insist that Kane leave town. They will submit to Miller's demands in order to save their lives, even if it means giving up some of the civil liberties they seem to hold so dear.

At another point on his existential journey, Kane encounters Helen Ramirez (played by the wonderful Mexican actress Katy Jurado), hotel owner and perhaps Kane's old lover. Having built up her business and made it successful, Helen encourages Kane to confront Miller and preserve the law-and-order sensibility that would keep her livelihood intact. Helen and Amy share one of the film's most memorable exchanges. When Amy decides to leave town without Will, Helen derisively says to her: "What kind of a woman are you? How can you leave him like this? Does the sound of guns frighten you that much?" Not backing down an inch, Amy shoots back: "I've heard guns. My father and brother were killed by guns. They were on the right side but that didn't help them any when the shooting started."

Even though being on the right side may cost him his life, however, Kane decides to face down Miller and his gang. In the film's climatic scenes, during which all of the literal "western action" takes place, Kane defeats Miller—interestingly, it is Amy who saves her husband's life, taking up a gun, good Quaker that she is, and shooting down one of Miller's henchmen. Having once more made Hadleyville safe for its cowering residents, Kane rips the badge from his chest and disgustedly flings it down on the dusty street. Mounting a buckboard wagon with Amy, he and his betrothed head into the sunset.

See also: Western, The

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—Michael L. Coulter

HOOP DREAMS. In 1987, three young filmmakers, Steve James, Peter Gilbert, and Fred Marx, scraped together \$2,500 to make a half-hour documentary about Chicago high school basketball. Seven years later, its budget now expanded to \$75,000 and the length of the film to three hours, *Hoop Dreams* won the Audience



Promotional image for the 1994 documentary film *Hoop Dreams*, directed by Steve James. Pictured is William Gates. (Photofest)

Award at the Sundance Festival, opened the New York Film Festival (the first documentary ever to be accorded that honor), and, after netting more than \$8 million in theatrical grosses, went into video release through New Line Home Video. Its conspicuous omission from the nominations for the 1994 Motion Picture Academy's Best Documentary category only garnered it more publicity, making it one of the most talked-about movies of that year. Its most vocal and enthusiastic champion, critic Roger Ebert, declared it "one of the best films about American life that I've ever seen." Virtually overnight the filmmakers and their subjects became celebrities, and the term "hoop dreams" quickly passed into the national vernacular.

In an important sense, *Hoop Dreams* was never a finished film, but a work in progress. During the protracted and tedious process of shooting it, James says he and his collaborators sometimes felt like they were "living inside an unfolding novel." Rather than imposing closure and tidy resolutions onto its materials, in the manner of a standard narrative film, it attempts, to borrow a memorable phrase from cinéma vérité filmmaker Chris Marker, "to capture life in the process of becoming history." Thus, it joins the ranks of other vérité classics from the last 40 years—David and Albert Maysles's *Salesman* (1960), Chris Marker's *Le joli mai* (1963), D. A. Pennebaker's *Don't Look Back* (1965), Barbara Kopple's *Harlan County, USA* (1976), Bruce Sinofsky's *Brother's Keeper* (1993), and the *Up* series of Paul Almond and Michael Apted—that chase the ongoing present, whose dramatic shape, meaning, and consequence continually reconfigure themselves. *Hoop Dreams* is dedicated to the proposition that history is never fixed, that in its unmediated flow and raw stuff reside the world's greatest stories.

Fresh out of grammar school and living in the Chicago housing projects, 14-year-old African Americans Arthur Agee and William Gates are “hoop dreamers.” Gifted basketball players, they think only of breaking out of the ghetto into the big time of professional athletics. They receive partial scholarships to the prestigious St. Joseph High School, which is renowned for its basketball program. The boys, however, are ill prepared, socially, academically, and physically, for the environment in which they find themselves. Their fifth-grade education levels place them at the bottom of their classes; they are out of touch with the lifestyles of the middle-class, white-dominated population; and on the hard court they find themselves challenged by the relentless pressures and demands of Coach Gene Pingatore.

The careers of William and Arthur radically diverge after they are enrolled at St. Joseph. William quickly establishes himself on the varsity team and, as a result, garners additional financial support from an enthusiastic backer, allowing him access to academic tutoring. Becoming a star, he suffers a serious knee injury during his junior year and is forced to undergo several operations. Eventually he makes a comeback; and at the end of his senior year he accepts a scholarship from Marquette University in Wisconsin. Arthur, on the other hand, has not only failed to satisfy Coach Pingatore’s demands (he is relegated to the freshman squad), but his mother has been unable to keep up with the tuition payments at St. Joseph. The scenes of Agee rising before dawn to make the long trek aboard the train to the prestigious school and of his mother discussing his precarious future there are particularly unsettling. In the end, lacking the talent he needs to attract a backer such as the one who supported Gates, Arthur is forced to transfer to Marshall Metro High School, an inner-city school that is predominantly black. Although his career blossoms under the black coach at Marshall, Luther Bedford, Arthur’s grades and ACT scores make him ineligible for Division One college scholarships. He finally accepts a scholarship to Mineral Area Junior College in southern Missouri.

In the almost five years that pass during the making of the film, both boys change tremendously. No longer basketball fanatics gazing raptly at televised images of NBA superstars, dreaming of their own glory and future riches, they are now young men who have endured defeats and frustrations; uncertain of their basketball prospects, they are prepared to consider the career alternatives with which they are necessarily faced.

Other characters in this story are driven by dreams of their own. Coach Pingatore—nicknamed “Ping”—is haunted by the glory days when he coached the fabulously talented Isaiah Thomas, who went on to become a Hall of Fame player with the Detroit Pistons. Driven by the desire to win another state championship, Pingatore cannot let go of the past, repeatedly showing his present charges videos of games in which Thomas played—he desperately hopes that Gates will turn out to be another Isaiah Thomas—and going so far as to place a life-sized cutout of Thomas in the locker room as a constant reminder of what he believes might be accomplished with hard work and dedication.

Ironically, and sadly, the great hope for a life free from the despair of the Chicago inner city that William and Arthur hold out for the other members of their families seems to have left these fragile people broken and bitter. William’s mother Emma, a

loving and caring woman who was abandoned by her husband several years before, unfairly fixes her hopes on her teenage son; so too William's older brother Curtis, once a collegiate prospect but now a chronically unemployed idler, who fiercely lives out his frustrated aspirations through William—"I see all my dreams in him," says Curtis. Arthur's father, Bo—whom Arthur seems to love and loath in the same moment—is a smooth-talking charmer whose good intentions for his family are destroyed by his addiction to crack. Arthur's mother Sheilah, who is also a loving and committed parent, struggles to keep her family together in the face of chronic unemployment and welfare cuts, all the while pursuing her own goal of a nursing career.

Unraveling the strands of their daily lives, the camera crosscuts restlessly among the homes, the locker rooms, the classrooms, the streets, and the hard courts. Poignant moments abound in this disturbing film: Arthur's glee at being introduced to his hero, Isaiah Thomas; William's frustration as he struggles to recover from his painful knee injury; Sheilah's celebratory dance when she learns that she has passed her nurse's certification exams; Bo buying drugs on a local playground where Arthur practices; Coach Pingatore gathering his team together to pray moments after he has brutally demeaned them.

The acclaim of the festivals and the notoriety garnered from the Academy's snub made *Hoop Dreams* into a cause célèbre. David Letterman joked about the situation during the Oscar ceremony and the partisan audience voiced its support. Tom Brokaw featured the film on *Dateline*; and, in an event dubbed by the press "Hoops to the Chief," President Clinton went to the University of Arkansas to play some highly publicized "one-on-one" with Arthur Agee. Agee autographed a basketball for his distinguished guest. Top Hollywood brass took notice. "It was pretty funny," said co-director James. "Typically, a guy would come up to us and say, 'Your film was so amazing. It moved me. I want to remake it.' Or somebody would say: 'Guys, I can *smell* this film; and it smells like something I want to do!' Of course, I haven't seen it yet. . . ."

See also: Documentary, The

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—John C. Tibbetts

HOW GREEN WAS MY VALLEY. In the sentimental drama *How Green Was My Valley* (1941), director John Ford offered moviegoers the story of a Welsh coal-mining community, including the close-knit Morgan family, caught in the upheaval of economic transformation and labor unrest. Although Ford, who inherited the film after original director William Wyler failed to meet Darryl Zanuck's budget, was best

known for his westerns, the movie was a critical success and earned him his third Oscar for Best Director in the span of six years. More notably, *How Green Was My Valley* also captured Best Picture honors for 1941, trumping two of the most acclaimed films in Hollywood history: Orson Welles's *Citizen Kane* and John Huston's *The Maltese Falcon*.

Ford's story of community crisis and change struck a chord with audiences poised between the dislocations of depression and war, but over the years commentators have offered vastly differing interpretations of the movie's legacy. The film's champions hailed Ford's visual poetry, insisting that the movie was imagistically poignant enough that it could be watched and understood without any sound at all. Harsher critics concluded that the film was saccharine and unrealistic, making it one of the most overrated productions of Hollywood's "Golden Age."

Adapted by screenwriter Philip Dunne from Richard Llewellyn's best-selling novel of the same title, *How Green Was My Valley* is one of Hollywood's quintessentially nostalgic films. The story is the recollection by an aging man of the formative events and people of his childhood. Because the film's narrative is built around the memories of a child, it is inherently wistful. At the same time, the film is a somber essay on the destructive power of progress and the high cost of modernity. Time and change are intruding on the idyllic mining community, bringing with them wage cuts, labor unrest, and unionization. Shorn of its nostalgic gloss, the film is sometimes as dreary as the black coal dust shrouding the Welsh hills in which it takes place.

The film is centered on young Huw Morgan (Roddy McDowall)—the audience never sees the adult Huw, narrator of the film. Too young to join his father, Gwilym (Donald Crisp), and his five older brothers in the mines, young Huw instead spends time with his mother, Bess (Sara Allgood), marking the changes that occur around him and taking stock of the tensions that accompany them. His earliest memories include the budding but doomed romance between his sister Angharad (Maureen O'Hara) and the town's new preacher, Mr. Gruffyd (Walter Pidgeon). There is no shortage of tragedy in Huw's life, as he must overcome paralysis, a sadistic schoolmaster, and several deaths, including that of his father who is killed in a mining accident.

Other memories recount the growing tension between father and sons as labor turmoil envelops the mines and Huw's siblings resist and then finally revolt against their father's conservative values. Filming while the labor question was paramount in America, Ford could easily have made *How Green Was My Valley* a radical film about the labor movement, closer in spirit, for example, to *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940). Yet Ford largely eschewed radical politics, choosing instead a tempered, centrist message, defending the right and responsibility to organize but going little further. Ultimately, the film was less about labor politics than it was about the disintegration of a way of life and of a family. It is a film filled with longing for a time gone by, about a father's loss of control over his home and sons, and about values warped by progress.

Still, the film provides a nostalgic gloss to one of the great tensions of the twentieth century: coupling the deep longing for what was with a faith, often childlike, and always uncertain, in progress. Even as the green hills of the valley are blackened, the Morgan family perseveres, finding strength in each other and in their memories.

How Green Was My Valley embraces the tensions at the story's core, navigating radical politics and mainstream values. In sum, it is a work indicative of Ford's own conflicting liberal and conservative instincts as well as his faith in America's promise and ability to overcome hard times.

See also: Ford, John; Melodrama, The

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—*Nathan M. Corzine*

IN THE COMPANY OF MEN. “The world of Neil LaBute is a battleground of carnage between the sexes,” wrote critic Roger Ebert. “Men and women distrust one another, scheme to humiliate one another, are inspired to fearsome depths of cruelty” (Ebert, 2003). Nowhere is this more evident than in LaBute’s breakout film, *In the Company of Men* (1997). There is a bone-hard, scalpel-clean precision to this film that makes its cruelties even harder to bear; and even though the film proceeds from a misogynistic plot hatched by two angry men, the ensuing tragic consequences know no gender lines—pain, it seems, makes us all equal.

In the Company of Men revolves around Chad (Aaron Eckhart) and Howard (Matt Malloy), longtime office colleagues and friends who have gone on a six-week business trip to a branch office of the corporation for which they work. Both have become disaffected after disastrous relationships with women, and both feel threatened by what they regard as the unwelcome incursions of women into the work place. “Never lose control,” proclaims Chad, “that’s the key to the universe.” On impulse, they decide to “get even.” Chad, tall, handsome, square-jawed, and immaculate in his shirt and tie, relates his plan to Howard, round-faced, dumpy, fair-haired: they will find a vulnerable woman—preferably disadvantaged or disabled in some way—and, independent of each other, woo and win her. At the end of six weeks, after they have both won her heart, they will summarily dump her and chortle in glee at their victory.

Their target is Christine (Stacy Edwards), a typist in their office building. She has been afflicted with deafness since she was a young girl. For a time, all goes according to plan. With all the attention lavished upon her—executed with all the proper galantries—Christine is an easy target. She is dazzled by her newfound social life, even as Chad and Howard laugh behind her back, amused at what they refer to as her “retard” voice, at her difficulty in speaking, at the spit that occasionally gathers at the corners of her mouth. Weeks pass. Gradually, inevitably perhaps, both men realize that their quarry is actually quite attractive. Indeed, they are beginning to enjoy spending time with Christine. What had begun as a vicious game has turned into something quite different. Now, we wonder, who will be the victim of this wicked conspiracy?

Interestingly, the men go about their daily rounds in stultifying fashion—in the airport on the way to their assignment, in men's rooms, in their offices, in the boardroom, in fast-food restaurants, in hotel rooms, they are disturbingly indifferent. They live bleak, featureless lives, brightened only by the vitality of the bloodthirst that marks their perverse office sports. There is a terrible unsettling moment when Chad forces an office underling to drop his pants to see if he "has the right kind of balls" for the job. The disturbing sexism of their humor emerges in lines such as, "What's the difference between a golf ball and a woman's G-spot?" Answer: "I'll spend twenty minutes looking for a golf ball!" Each setup is punctuated by title cards tracing the chronology of the six weeks, and each title is accompanied by a relentlessly pounding music track (the only moments during which music is heard). Wisely, the film keeps the ill-fated Christine at a distance, which emphasizes her subtle allure and enlists our empathy.

Things seemingly unfold in their predictable way, but then Howard falls hopelessly—helplessly—in love with Christine. When she tells him that she is actually in love with Chad, Howard goes crazy. In an excruciating scene, he confesses the plot to her. It's a desperate gambit: in a frantic attempt to prove his own love, he must denounce Chad's. Christine sobs inarticulately and lashes out at Howard. Later she confronts Chad. Protesting at first, Chad drops all pretense and admits his duplicity. "How does it feel?" he asks gently, cupping her chin in his hand. She slaps him. Silence. "Is that *all*?" he asks after a moment, smiling slightly.

Weeks later, Howard, distraught, sick, lacerated by a guilty conscience, comes to talk to Chad. At this point, Chad confesses that the girl he claimed had left him had never really left at all—she's been with him all along, an unwitting co-conspirator, as it were. "Then why the game with Christine?" asks Howard, bewildered. "Because I could do it," Chad replies callously. In an epilogue, Howard follows Christine to her new job in a bank. He tries to approach her but is blocked by a barrier in front of her desk. Helplessly, he shouts out to her. She, of course, ignores him. He shouts louder, then louder still. Her deafness is her trump card. The film's final shot is from her point of view: Howard's mouth moves noiselessly—a brief moment that defines the entire film. The very thing that made her vulnerable to the men's machinations in the first place, her deafness proves to be the weapon that protects her in the end.

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—John C. Tibbetts

IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT. With race riots igniting cities from Detroit to Newark and university protests exploding across America, the civil unrest that marked the late 1960s and early 1970s reached a fever pitch in 1967. While America attempted to achieve a sense of calm and stability, Hollywood was attempting to sort through its

diverse group of contenders for the 1968 Best Picture Academy award: Arthur Penn's *Bonnie and Clyde*, Mike Nichols's *The Graduate*, Richard Fleischer's *Doctor Dolittle*, Stanley Kramer's *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, and Norman Jewison's *In the Heat of the Night*. Exhibiting neither the visceral counterculture spirit of *Bonnie and Clyde* and *The Graduate* nor the Production Code-friendly appeal of *Doctor Dolittle* and *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, Jewison's film, which follows the investigation into the murder of a wealthy industrialist in Sparta, Mississippi, captured an America in flux.

The first interracial male narrative in which a black protagonist is a symbol of law and order, *In the Heat of the Night*, while raising questions about racism in the Deep South, may properly be understood as a film that is fundamentally concerned with small-town power politics. When deputy Sam Wood (Warren Oates) finds Virgil Tibbs (Sidney Poitier), a black man, alone at a train station after the body of Philip Colbert, a wealthy Chicago investor looking to build a factory in Sparta, appears on the town's main street, Wood brings Tibbs to the newly installed police chief Bill Gillespie (Rod Steiger) for questioning. Learning that Tibbs is carrying a large amount of cash, the deeply racist Gillespie suspects that Tibbs robbed and killed Colbert. After putting in a call to Philadelphia, he is embarrassed to discover that Tibbs is actually a well-respected homicide detective who was simply visiting his mother. Grudgingly, Gillespie seeks Tibbs's help with the investigation, a decision that leads to numerous heated exchanges between the two. Pressured to close the case quickly, Gillespie attempts to pin the murder on one of a number of suspects—including petty thief Harvey Oberst (Scott Wilson) and, eventually, his own deputy Sam Wood.

Dissatisfied with Gillespie's efforts, Colbert's widow (Lee Grant) demands that Tibbs be allowed to conduct a full investigation. Tibbs's investigation eventually leads him to question a wealthy, white plantation owner and Colbert rival, Eric Endicott (Larry Gates). During the course of their discussion, Endicott slaps Tibbs; undaunted, Tibbs slaps Endicott back—ultimately dubbed “the slap heard 'round the world”—much to Gillespie's surprise. Although he believes that Endicott is indeed involved in the murder, Tibbs eventually discovers that the killer is actually not Endicott but café employee Ralph Henshaw (Anthony James)—desperate to secure funds for an abortion after impregnating a local teen, Delores Purdy (Quentin Dean), Henshaw killed Colbert in a botched robbery attempt. With the investigation complete, Tibbs and Gillespie exchange terse goodbyes at the train station, seemingly having cultivated a mutual respect for one another.

Though popular with audiences and admired by the majority of critics, the film had its detractors. Some argued that its portrayal of the relationship between Tibbs and Gillespie was unrealistic and covered over the incendiary black/white racial tensions of the day, especially in deep South states like Mississippi; and further, that the picture presented a one-dimensional depiction of the South. Poitier, who had starred in three highly regarded films that year—including *To Sir, with Love* and another Best Picture Academy Award nominee, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*—was placed in an untenable position, as he was pressured by the media to speak out about black/white relations in America and the increase in racial violence that continued to plague the nation. Resisting these rather forceful entreaties, Poitier may have hurt his chances to

capture an Academy Award for any of his performances that year—he failed even to be nominated. Admittedly, though, it was an extraordinarily competitive year—Poitier had co-starred with eventual Best Actor winner Rod Steiger in *In the Heat of the Night*, and with screen legend Spencer Tracy, in his last performance, in *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?*, and Dustin Hoffman was also a contender for his work in *The Graduate*. In the end, the awards would be split across the powerful films in competition that year, with *In the Heat of the Night* earning the Best Picture Oscar. Still respected today, *In the Heat of the Night* spawned two sequels, *They Call Me MISTER Tibbs!* (1970) and *The Organization* (1971), as well as an eponymous, eight-season-long television series.

See also: African Americans in Film; Melodrama, The; Poitier, Sidney

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—Jerod Ra'Del Hollyfield

INDEPENDENCE DAY. Roland Emmerich's *Independence Day* (1996) combines alien invasion, disaster, heroism, and the genius of science—or at least of science fiction. It celebrates American nationalism, while claiming to affirm the glories of the global community. The story is a simple one: with the United States leading the way, the nations of the world must put aside their differences and come together to battle rapacious aliens—who ominously arrive on Earth on the eve of Independence Day.

Emmerich was an inspired choice to direct *Independence Day*. Having helmed the *Manchurian Candidate*-esque *Universal Soldier* (1992)—in which cyborglike UniSols, programmed during a covert operation in Vietnam to use their deadly skills as a force for good, become a threat to the civilized world—and especially *Stargate*—in which a scientist and U.S. military troops travel across the universe to a planet where a madman is hatching a plan to destroy the Earth with a nuclear weapon—Emmerich had a feel for how to make a “the world must be saved” action picture. Interestingly, following the success of *Independence Day*, Emmerich would go on to direct *Godzilla* (1998) (crazed giant reptile threatens New York City) *The Day after Tomorrow* (2004) (global warming becomes a nuclear weaponlike menace that could initiate a new Ice Age, threatening Earth's existence); *10,000 B. C.* (2008) (a young hunter must travel to the ends of the Earth to battle evil warlords who threaten the survival of his entire tribe); and *2012* (2009) (a global cataclysm threatens to bring the world to an end).

Of all Emmerich's films, *Independence Day* is probably his best—and most jingoistic. The story begins on July 2nd, when massive alien battleships suddenly appear

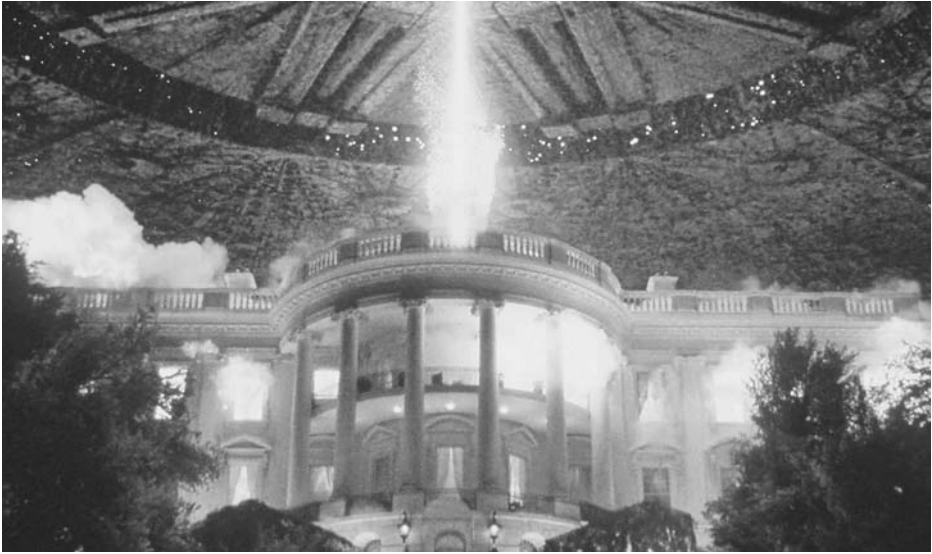


Photo showing the special effects in a scene from the movie *Independence Day*, released by Twentieth Century-Fox. The scene shows the White House being blown up in an attack by aliens from outer space. *Independence Day* cost \$75 million to make and earned \$306 million. (STR/AFP/Getty Images)

above the major cities of the world, coming out of the clouds like a menacing darkness. Soon after, they begin their attack. With extraordinary special effects, a ship above New York is shown focusing an enormous death ray on the Empire State Building. UFO lovers standing atop the building are blown to smithereens, while those on the streets below run from an inferno of explosions and flying cars. The same thing happens in Washington D.C., but Air Force One manages to whisk the president of the United States, Thomas Whitmore (Bill Pullman), to safety. Accompanying him on the iconic plane are his daughter and a computer whiz, David Levinson (Jeff Goldblum), who happened to be in the White House warning the president about the impending attack.

The aliens in this film—the ultimate ethnic Others—are the kind that people love to hate. Slimy, tentacled creatures, they lack mouths and communicate telepathically. Traveling across the galaxy—much as Hitler blitzkrieged his way across Europe—they attack and conquer each successive planet they encounter, extracting what resources they can and leaving death and destruction in their wake. After an alien is captured on earth, President Whitmore makes an effort to effect some kind of diplomatic détente. The alien figure wants nothing to do with the president's attempt at realpolitik reconciliation, however, rejecting the idea of sharing the earth's resources and making it clear that it wants nothing more than to see all humans killed.

This graphic representation of ultimate evil, combined with immense power, works to unite the peoples of the world in their struggle to survive. The U.S. resistance is led by President Whitmore, an experienced fighter pilot. Also joining the fight is another

pilot, U.S. Marine Captain Steven Hiller (Will Smith), and Levinson, who works to disable the alien mother ship's shields by planting a virus in the ship's computer.

This film's theme of uniting against hostile aliens shares features with earlier alien invasion films—*War of the Worlds* (1953) and *The Thing* (1982), for example. As they were in these earlier films, aliens are portrayed as grotesque and threatening worldwide destruction. Unlike in those films, however, in *Independence Day* notions of global independence are framed by an overarching nationalist vision constituted in relation to the idea of American exceptionalism. Pivotal decisions concerning global defense are made in the Oval Office, America's national monuments are conspicuously displayed, American heroes fight the good fight, and President Whitmore gives an impassioned speech proclaiming that only a shared victory can insure that humanity will live to celebrate a global independence day: "Should we win the day," declares Whitmore, "the Fourth of July will no longer be known as an American holiday, but as the day the world declared in one voice, 'we will not go quietly into the night, we will not vanish without a fight, we are going to live on, we are going to survive, today we celebrate our independence day.'" Whitmore's soaring rhetoric works its magic, and the members of the earth's global community—Israeli and Iraqi, Russian and Japanese, all pervasively united under the banner of American nationalism—come together to make the world, as Woodrow Wilson warned we must, safe for democracy.

See also: Action-Adventure Film, The; Science Fiction Films

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—Susan de Gaia

INDIANA JONES. Dr. Indiana "Indy" Jones (Harrison Ford) is the title character of a popular franchise developed by film school friends George Lucas and Steven Spielberg. The series was built primarily on three films: *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981), *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984), and *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989). After a two-decade absence from the big screen, Jones returned in *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* (2008). In terms of content, theme, and style, the Indiana Jones movies demonstrate nostalgia for times of high adventure and excitement.

The original trilogy takes place before World War II, mimicking the action-packed tone of movies of the day. Set in 1936, *Raiders* sees archaeologist Jones pressed by the U.S. Government to prevent Hitler's forces from recovering the Lost Ark of the Covenant. Teaming with lost love Marion (Karen Allen) in Nepal, Indy heads on to Egypt where he finds the Ark, only to lose it to the Nazis. The wrath of God seems

to strike down the Nazis when the Ark is opened. Indy survives, but he is disheartened when his own government takes the Ark, placing it in a strange warehouse.

Temple of Doom is a prequel of sorts. This 1935 adventure sees Indy fleeing Chinese gangsters. Accompanied by his sidekick Short Round (Jonathan Ke Quan) and singer Willie Scott (Kate Capshaw), Indy is caught up in a struggle to rescue an Indian village from a Thuggee cult. *Last Crusade* opens with a 1912 adventure for young Indy (River Phoenix), and then shifts over to a 1938 battle against the Nazis. This time Indy must help his father, Dr. Henry Jones (played marvelously against type by Sean Connery), stop the villains from acquiring the Holy Grail. *Crystal Skull* jumps ahead to 1957 for some Cold War action against the Soviets. Opening in the mysterious warehouse from *Raiders*, the film has Indy working to prevent the Soviets from discovering the secret to the alien skulls. Indy discovers an unknown son in Mutt Williams (Shia LaBeouf) and is reunited with Mutt's mother, Marion.

Filled with daring exploits and adventure, one signature of the franchise is that each movie has several long action sequences. In *Raiders*, for example, a tense escape from the snake-infested Well of Souls leads directly into a thrilling fight on a grounded flying wing aircraft; this, in turn, is followed by a lengthy chase involving a truck convoy. Whether menaced by snakes, a bruiser of a flight mechanic, or being dragged behind a truck from which he has been thrown, Indy is in danger from one moment to the next.

Although the title character is an accomplished archaeologist and university professor, Indiana Jones is no stuffy academic. Rather, he is perfectly suited for the kinds of wild situations he often encounters. Iconic in his dusty leather jacket and brown fedora, with his favorite bullwhip and pistol by his side, Indy is a two-fisted everyman-adventurer in the classic American mode. He can plan, but he also relies



Scene from the 1989 film *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, directed by Steven Spielberg and starring Harrison Ford. (Photofest)

on his intuition. Racing off to rescue the Ark in *Raiders*, he is asked by his Egyptian friend Sallah (John Rhys-Davies) what his plans are. His famous reply: "I don't know. I'm making this up as I go along." A scrappy fighter, Indy can and often does endure a great deal of punishment. Both physically and mentally agile, however, he usually emerges victorious from his brawls. Although he almost always escapes mortal danger because he is daringly creative, he is also sometimes ridiculously lucky. In *Temple of Doom*, for example, Indy, Willie, and Short Round survive what seems to be certain death by jumping from a crashing plane, just in the nick of time, into an inflatable raft, which they then ride down a snow-covered mountain into a raging river.

In addition to all the action, the Indiana Jones pictures also incorporate moments of horror. One signature element of the franchise is that in each film, Indy encounters large numbers of fear-inducing animals. Phobic when it comes to snakes, his courage is put to the test in *Raiders* when he discovers that the Well of Souls, the location of the Ark, is squirming with countless serpents—"Snakes, why did it have to be snakes!" Although he apparently suffers no phobias in regard to these vermin—although we certainly may!—in *Temple of Doom* our hero must navigate a tunnel of insects; in *Last Crusade*, he must find his way through a catacomb overrun with rats; and in *Crystal Skull* he must face army ants that devourer human flesh with carnivorous zeal.

Other horrors involve the fates of many of the villains in the films. In *Raiders*, Nazis Toht (Ronald Lacy) and Dietrich (Wolf Kahler) essentially melt away when they make the mistake of looking into the opened Ark, while the head of evil archaeologist Belloq (Paul Freeman) explodes. *Last Crusade* sees traitorous Donovan (Julian Glover) die from super-speed aging when he drinks from a bejeweled cup he mistakes for the Holy Grail, and in *Temple of Doom*, Soviet villainess Spalko (Cate Blanchett) is obliterated in a psychic encounter with aliens. Perhaps, though, the most famous horror sequence of the franchise comes from the latter film. In *Temple*, Thuggee cult leader Mola Ram (Amrish Puri) uses his hand to pull the still-beating hearts from the chests of his victims. (Interestingly, public reaction to this special effect inspired the creation of the PG-13 rating.)

The *Indiana Jones* films implicitly configure the times before World War II as the last era of great adventure. In a stylistic mode reminiscent of older films (such as the opening moments of 1942's *Casablanca*), Indy travels that world through a montage that superimposes the mode of transportation onto a red line making its way across a brown map to places like Egypt, India, and Brazil. Indy is a savvy traveler, wise to the importance of respecting the local customs. The films are not always as respectful as Indy himself. Although not all people of color are portrayed as savages, villains from these "older cultures" often are, especially when they appear in large numbers. The Thuggee cultists from *Temple of Doom* and the tribal guardians of the temple in *Crystal Skull* are particularly salient examples. *Temple of Doom* also gives another example of this "third world" stereotyping: Indy, Willie, and Short Round are guests at a banquet at which items of food are presented as nothing short of bizarre, and Indy and Short Round laugh derisively at Willie's attempts to deal with chilled monkey brains served right from the animal's skull.

True villainy in the *Indiana Jones* universe is clearly equated with the Nazis, however. Indeed, Indy is twice contrasted with evil archaeologists in the employ of Hitler:

Raiders' Belloq and *Last Crusade's* Dr. Elsa Schneider (Alison Doody). Although not a Nazi himself, Belloq is willing to use Hitler's ambitions and lead the Nazi expedition to recover the Ark in order to further his own interests. Indy is disgusted by Belloq's allegiances; although, ironically, it is Belloq who points out that there is little difference between the two adventurers. Schneider's Nazi connections are particularly troubling, as she is also a love interest of Indy. At one point in *Last Crusade*, Indy and his father have covertly pursued Schneider to Berlin. Indy confronts her at a book burning rally, hammering home the point that the Nazis seek to extinguish knowledge. An amusing aside then sees Indy accidentally meeting Hitler, with the dictator mistaking Indy for an autograph seeker. In drawing these contrasts, the films seem to gloss over Indy's own motives for relic hunting: he thinks items belong in museums for all to see—not quite the same as returning materials to their native cultures.

Although the moral ideology expressed in the *Indiana Jones* films is typically made explicit, the shadowy metaphysical entities that embody that morality are more difficult to divine. Still, it is clear that higher powers are at work in the films. Opening the Ark of the Covenant in *Raiders*, for example, evokes the wrath of some “what,” presumably the God of the Old Testament (made manifest within a decidedly Christian context), that rains down in full-force-special-effects-wonder on the Nazis; and drinking from the Holy Grail—the Last Supper cup of Jesus—heals the mortally wounded Henry and keeps an ancient crusader alive for centuries. In a less religiously miraculous sense, the Sankara stones in *Temple of Doom* seem to possess magical powers. In the final battle with Mola Ram, for instance, the stones burn and appear to provide Indy with a spiritual strength that allows him finally to overcome his tenacious foe. Interestingly, the films never provide us with definitive answers to the metaphysical questions they raise. While Henry Jones does believe in something that transcends the finite world, his son Indy is more pragmatic. Although in each of the films, Indy encounters something mysterious, he never really pauses to consider what that something might be. (It may be that *Crystal Skull* violates these unwritten rules to a certain extent, as the film provides us with a great deal of exposition and suggests that the skull in question could possibly be the product of alien, albeit not divine, beings.)

Two more themes are also characteristic of the *Indiana Jones* films. The first is intense yet unsustainable romance. The embodiment of the iconic American hero who must not be tied down by the things of civilization, Indy never seems to be able to keep a romantic relationship alive between films; still, as befits our filmic heroes, he is always paired with a woman he loves and leaves. (Interestingly, *Crystal Skull* sees an older Indy [and an older Harrison Ford] finally settling down, as he is reunited with and marries Marion.)

Although missing from *Raiders*, the films in the series also explore the theme of fatherhood. (This is familiar thematic territory for collaborators Lucas and Spielberg, who, in their own individual films, have examined the role of the father, or the father-figure, as both breaker and redeemer within the family structure.) In *Temple of Doom*, for instance, Indy reluctantly serves as a tough yet compassionate father figure for Short Round; in *Last Crusade*, Indy and Henry must negotiate their own, tortured father-son relationship; and finally, in *Crystal Skull*, Indy is presented with the son he never knew, and a new family is formed.

Never quite ascending to the dizzying merchandising heights of the *Star Wars* franchise, the *Indiana Jones* movies have still spawned a frenzy of spin-offs. In addition to all the individually licensed products, the Indy character has appeared in a variety of other media: novels, comic books, and videogames. One notable example is *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles*, a television series that debuted in 1992. The series focused on the adventures of Indy as a child (Corey Carrier), or more often as a teen (Sean Patrick Flannery). In the show, audiences saw Indy grow into his role as the great adventurer, as he encountered a host of famous historical figures.

While the *Indiana Jones* series has not inspired as many cinematic imitators as *Star Wars* or *Star Trek*, the adventurous spirit of the franchise can certainly be seen in movies like *King Solomon's Mines* (1985) and *Romancing the Stone* (1984). Perhaps the greatest accomplishment the franchise can claim, however, is that it successfully refreshed the spirit of a more down-to-earth American adventure hero in the era of science fiction blockbusters. As his many fans from all over the world are aware, adventure has a name, and that name is Indiana Jones.

See also: Action-Adventure Film, The; Spielberg, Steven

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—Michael G. Robinson

INSIDER, THE. Departing from the action-adventure and crime film genres for the first time in his career, writer/director Michael Mann created a scathing indictment of the American cigarette and television news industries with *The Insider* (1999). Based on Marie Brenner's 1996 *Vanity Fair* article "The Man Who Knew Too Much," the film follows the ordeal faced by Dr. Jeffrey Wigand (Russell Crowe) when he attempts to blow the whistle on Big Tobacco, as well as the efforts of *60 Minutes* producer Lowell Bergman (Al Pacino), who fights his superiors in order to get Wigand's story on the air. By turns a crackling thriller and powerful drama, the picture serves as a potent reminder of the importance of investigative journalism and the human costs of corporate greed.

The first half of *The Insider* focuses on Wigand, his dilemma in going public with what he knows, and the tribulations he suffers after he decides to do so. The head research scientist at Brown & Williamson Tobacco, he is fired after a dispute with his boss (Michael Gambon). When contacted by Bergman to consult on a *60 Minutes* piece about smoking, Wigand is initially reluctant, as he plans to honor the confidentiality agreement he signed upon termination. He changes his mind after Brown & Williamson attempts to insure his silence by undertaking a campaign of intimidation

against him and his family, which includes death threats and a bullet placed in his mailbox. Wigand must first testify in a Mississippi court case in order to get his information onto the public record, risking imprisonment by defying a restraining order placed on him by a Kentucky judge friendly with Big Tobacco. He then tapes a devastating interview with *60 Minutes* correspondent Mike Wallace (Christopher Plummer), in which he reveals the fact that Brown & Williamson knowingly included cancer-causing chemicals in their cigarettes and, despite Wigand's protests, refused to pull the products until a safer alternative could be found.

Once Wigand tapes this interview, a new battle emerges, serving as the focus of the film's second half. Due to the threat of lawsuits from Brown & Williamson, CBS's corporate lawyers pressure the news division to pull the story. Although initially resistant, and despite Bergman's emphatic protests, both Wallace and *60 Minutes'* executive producer Don Hewitt (Philip Baker Hall) buckle, excising Wigand's interview from the episode that finally airs. Angered by his superior's abandonment of Wigand after he has endured so much, Bergman exposes the controversy in the press, humiliating Wallace and embarrassing CBS into airing Wigand's interview.

The central theme of Mann's film is the juxtaposition of corporate greed with the everyday heroism demonstrated by whistleblowers like Wigand. Wigand is an inherently decent man and a scientist by training, and thus his conscience demands that he expose the health risks inherent in smoking, despite the knowledge that doing so will ruin his comfortable life and place his family's future in doubt. Ultimately, Wigand's noble deed costs him dearly: his wife leaves him, he is attacked in the press, and he eventually contemplates suicide. The film excoriates the television news industry for emphasizing entertainment over journalistic integrity, criticizing *60 Minutes* for encouraging Wigand to violate his confidentiality agreement and then abandoning him when the possibility of a lawsuit appears. In this respect, both Wigand and Bergman, at different times, serve as the "insider" in the film's title: Wigand for exposing Big Tobacco's malfeasance and Bergman for doing the same at *60 Minutes*.

The Insider was the source of considerable controversy after it was initially released. Brown & Williamson denied intimidating Wigand, pointing out that his ex-wife believed he placed the bullet in the mailbox himself. Furthermore, CBS contended that the film showed Wallace in "a very misleading light," and that rather than buckling under legal pressures, he fought against the decision to cut Wigand's interview. Mann responded to these criticisms by noting that the film did alter events for dramatic impact, but that its broad strokes were true. Indeed, real individuals who had been portrayed in the film, such as Richard Scruggs, the Mississippi attorney for whom Wigand testified, praised its accuracy. Despite this controversy, *The Insider* earned seven Academy Award nominations, including those for Best Picture, Director, and Actor (Crowe).

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—Bryan Kvet

INTERIORS. Woody Allen followed his Oscar-winning *Annie Hall* with *Interiors* (1978), his first true drama. In this darkly melodic portrait of the dissolution of a dysfunctional family, Arthur (E. G. Marshall) tells Eve (Geraldine Page) he wants a trial separation. The film then charts the reactions of various family members to this separation. Joey (Mary Beth Hurt), who has never been close to her mother and desperately wants her affection, tries to comfort Eve, who has suffered a nervous breakdown. The other family members exploit Joey's charity. Joey has a love/hate relationship with her sister, Renata (Diane Keaton); she admires her artistic success, but resents her distance from the parents' drama. Joey feels that Renata was the child her mother loved best, while Renata complains that Joey was their father's favorite. The third sister, Flynn (Kristin Griffith), is a Hollywood actress, whose brief appearances reflect her lack of interest in the family. She is never with the others long enough to become entangled emotionally. In fact, her rejection of Frederick's sexual advances is due not to her devotion to her sister, or out of some ethical code, but rather reflects an emotional coolness rendering her incapable of sexual arousal. Similarly, the overall mood of the film is void of passion. This is the cool, almost monochromatic world that Eve has created for her family.

Shapes and colors carry significant metaphorical weight throughout *Interiors*. The colors are muted pastels and earth tones, and Gordon Willis's photography uses soft, muted lighting, which has the effect of absorbing the characters into the sets. The result is a tragic organic unity between the family and its environment; they are trapped. Eve favors the vase as a decorative item, and its delicate, feminine shape seems representative of her; but the cool greens and grays she chooses also echo her icy character. When the vase is broken by Pearl (Maureen Stapleton), Arthur's new wife, resplendent in her bright red dress, the accident is understood by Joey as a symbolic act of aggression toward Eve's "perfect," suffocating world.

One of the key symbols in the film is the family house, in which most of the group's gatherings take place. It is where Arthur announces his desire to separate from Eve; yet even though Eve moves out, there is no sense that Arthur occupies the house—while she lives, it remains Eve's creation. When she dies, so too does the perfectly decorated house. The opening shots of Joey walking through the house take place after her mother's death, and convey a sense of emptiness. Ironically, though, it is the same emptiness that existed even when Eve occupied the space. The title, therefore, suggests that the physical interior spaces designed by Eve, and the emotional interior spaces of her children and husband, are mirror images of each other.

Interiors is Allen's tribute to the iconic Swedish director Ingmar Bergman and specifically the latter's *Cries and Whispers*. Both films share a sense of starkness, opening with limited dialog and only ambient sound. The characters are stoic, and the sets

are austere. While Bergman's film is imbued with crimson, however, Allen's is cast in subtle earth tones and pastels. A similar theme is the façade of conventions and physical structures (interior spaces) constructed by the characters in order to hide their emotional emptiness.

As was mentioned, *Interiors* was Allen's follow-up to the previous year's Best Picture winner, *Annie Hall*, which established Woody Allen as an important filmmaker. *Interiors*' serious tone came as a shock to most viewers and critics, who had grown accustomed to Allen's comedies and it had only marginal success at the box office. Allen addresses this issue two films later, in *Stardust Memories*, which is about a filmmaker at odds with his fans' expectations. Allen's later film, *Hannah and Her Sisters*, is very similar to *Interiors*, so much so that some critics have considered it a remake. Noticeable differences include more lighthearted comic elements and the presence of Allen himself. Interestingly, *Hannah and Her Sisters* was a commercial success and is considered one of Allen's best films.

See also: Allen, Woody

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—Dean R. Cooledge

INTOLERANCE. D. W. Griffith's *Intolerance* (1916)—often subtitled *Love's Struggle Through the Ages*—is certainly his most innovative and ambitious film. Stung by the negative reaction to his epic *Birth of a Nation* (1915)—a film that many believed perpetuated coarse racial stereotypes and glorified the Ku Klux Klan—Griffith responded with this complex presentation of four parallel narratives that were tied together by thematic elements such as injustice, religious intolerance, and tragic and redeeming love. The intricate plotlines range from ancient Babylon to the early twentieth century, and as the film reaches its moralizing climax, Griffith cuts back and forth between these stories with increasing rapidity, linking each narrative shift with the recurring image of a woman (Lillian Gish) rocking a cradle—a personification of the triumph of the human spirit over its own tendency toward the inhumane.

The first of these narratives, "The Modern Story," was actually the plotline of a movie entitled *The Mother and the Law* that Griffith was shooting when he decided to respond to the controversy surrounding *Birth of a Nation*. Set during the Progressive era of the early twentieth century, this narrative features Griffin's searing critique of contemporary social reform through the characters of Miss Jenkins (Vera Lewis) and the puritanical "Vestal Virgins of Uplift." The protagonist, an Irish Catholic laborer identified simply

as the Boy (Robert Harron), loses his job when the factory owner (the brother of Miss Jenkins, played by Sam de Grasse) reduces wages in order to support the Uplifters' reforming efforts, resulting in a strike that the owner ruthlessly suppresses. The Boy turns to a life of petty crime, but is redeemed by the love of the Dear One (Mae Marsh), who has been reduced to poverty through similar circumstances. Despite the Boy's efforts to turn his life around, he and his family continue to be victimized both by the criminal elements of the urban slums and by the intrusive reforms of the Uplifters themselves. Eventually, he is wrongly accused of murder and faces death on the gallows.

The second narrative, "The Judean Story," offers Howard Gaye as "The Nazarene" in a retelling of various episodes from the gospels. The story focuses on the conflicts between Jesus and the Jewish Pharisees that led, as Griffith interprets the story, to the crucifixion. Although not the first time the drama of the Christian passion account had been filmed, Griffith employed the story to serve his own moralistic didacticism. In the film, the self-righteous Pharisees are explicitly connected to the meddlesome reformers of the Modern Story, thus making the Boy—and all those who suffer similarly from misguided critics—a sympathetic Christ figure.

The remaining two storylines were fictionalized and dramatized historical events. "The Babylonian Story" recounted the fall of that empire to the Persians through the treachery of the priests of Bel, who have lost their religious monopoly under Prince Belshazzar's tolerant rule. The key protagonist in this story is Mountain Girl (Constance Talmadge), often hailed as the first feminist heroine in American cinema, who vainly fights to preserve Belshazzar's empire. In "The French Story," the queen regent Catherine de Medici (Josephine Crowell) plots the destruction of her Huguenot opponents in Griffith's interpretation of the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre of 1572. Driven by a mixture of religious intolerance and political ambition, the queen's evil designs lead to the death of two Huguenot lovers, who are the sixteenth-century equivalents of the Boy and the Dear One. In the end, the Boy is reprieved by the last second confession of the real murderer, but the other stories end with loss and destruction. The final scenes, however, offer a utopian vision of peace and tolerance, as soldiers throw down their weapons and angels appear in the heavens beside a shining cross.

Although the initial public response was strong, *Intolerance* quickly lost its popular appeal. Audiences distracted by the escalating war in Europe had little sympathy for Griffith's pacifism or his criticisms of a fading Progressivism. Similarly, critics were, and remain, divided over the significance of the film. Many regard it a masterpiece and cinematic milestone—certainly it introduced numerous production techniques that became industry standards—but others have argued it is an overwrought and over-long failure.

See also: Birth of a Nation, The; Griffith, D. W.

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—Rodger M. Payne

INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS. *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956) is an enduringly popular Cold War–era science fiction film noted for paranoid chills and a famously modified ending. Set in the pleasant town of Santa Mira, California, the film centers around a subtly accomplished invasion by alien plants that use large seed pods to produce duplicates of human beings after the humans fall asleep. The narrative follows town doctor Miles Bennell (Kevin McCarthy), who returns from a conference to find a strange paranoia present in his community. This paranoia has emerged, it seems, because on some level unaffected members of the community who knew the “snatched” humans before they were invaded can sense something is different about these duplicates. Miles is distracted by the return of his lost love Becky Driscoll (Dana Wynter). Their relationship is slightly risqué for the era, as both characters are recently divorced from other people and are overtly flirtatious.

Miles realizes strange events are, indeed, occurring when his friends Jack (King Donovan) and Jack’s wife “Teddy” (Carolyn Jones) stumble upon an unformed duplicate. Briefly convinced by psychologist Danny Kaufman (Larry Gates) that he has



Actress Dana Wynter and actor Kevin McCarthy hold hands and run from unseen terror in a still from the horror motion picture *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, directed by Don Siegel, 1956. (Allied Artists/Getty Images)

simply succumbed to mass hysteria, Miles' suspicions are confirmed when he discovers more seed pods in his greenhouse. After the friends split up to escape, Miles and Becky realize the extent of the body snatching, witnessing an ordinary morning turn into a moment during which a meeting is convened in order to distribute additional pods to surrounding areas.

With the town members now arrayed against them, Miles and Becky are confronted by the bodysnatched Danny and Jack. The emotionless pods explain that their life is now comfortably ordered, but our heroes reject the idea of living in such a passive and loveless world. After escaping and being chased into the hills, Miles sadly loses the exhausted Becky to the pods. Running out into the road, his frenzied warnings make him appear insane. The film was intended to end at this point with a close-up of Miles's face, but after test audiences found this ending lacked a sense of resolve, Allied Artists added a number of scenes meant to frame the narrative. In the new opening, a distraught Miles relates the events to another psychologist (Whit Bissell) as a flashback with voice-over. In the new closing sequence, authority figures, who initially disbelieve Miles, accidentally discover more seed pods, lending credence to his story and setting the authority figures into action, presumably to save the day.

While the pod people appear as the ultimate conformists in *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, weaving that theme into the fabric of the real-world concerns of the time is more complex. Targeting individuality and displaying a lack of motivation beyond simple survival, the aliens appear to embody American stereotypes of Cold War communists. However, the film also cautions against the kinds of reactionary groupthink that gripped Americans during this hypersensitive era. A fundamental human insecurity may also be read into the film, a sense that one never truly knows exactly who other people really are—a notion that resonated with Americans convinced that communist spies lurked around every corner. While the duplicates are by no means the sluggish, mindless cannibals that filmic zombies would become after the release of *Night of the Living Dead* in 1968, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* presages the chaotic excitement that defined scenarios in which the few must face a mob of the many. In one suspenseful sequence, for example, Miles and Becky blend in with the snatchers, pretending that they too have no emotions; unfortunately, all-too-human Becky fails to fool the duplicates, who realize what she is after she shouts a warning as a truck almost hits a dog.

The popularity of the original picture inspired a number of remakes and reimaginings. Perhaps the most notable was the 1978 version. While updating the special effects and shifting the narrative setting to the urban environs of San Francisco, the 1970s version of the film follows the basic plot points of the original (although a fun, early cameo by Kevin McCarthy delivering his crazed speech from the 1956 film allows one to imagine the pictures are somehow related). The 1978 version also added a particularly startling quality to the pod people, who now point and emit a disturbing scream when they spot normal humans. *Body Snatchers* (1993) moved the action of the film to an American military base. A commercial failure, *The Invasion* (2007) changed the nature of the invaders from plants to viral contaminate.

Despite the varied records of the films that followed *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, the original has endured as a popular choice among latter-day viewers, continuing to have a chilling effect on them. After all, we all have to go to sleep, do we not?

See also: Science Fiction Film, The

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—Michael G. Robinson

IRON MAN. The box-office successes of the *Spiderman* and *X-Men* franchises were enough for Marvel Comics to decide to form their own production studio. *Iron Man* (2008) was the first major motion picture released by Marvel Studios, and it marks the first in a series of feature films that will allow the various characters in the Marvel Comics universe to interact with each other in a similar manner to the comic books. Earning over \$300 million at the domestic box office, it was the second-highest-grossing feature in 2008 (behind *The Dark Knight*), and this financial success bodes well for a host of related movies already scheduled for release. Throughout *Iron Man*, there are direct references to or cameos from the forthcoming Marvel Studios movies: *Nick Fury* (2010), *The First Avenger: Captain America* (2011), and *The Avengers* (2012). Already, Robert Downey Jr. has had



Scene from the 2008 film *Iron Man*, directed by Jon Favreau and starring Robert Downey Jr. (Photofest)

a cameo in Marvel Studios *The Incredible Hulk* (2008), and the studio has also announced two *Iron Man* sequels, slated for release in 2010 and 2012.

It took a long time for the *Iron Man* franchise to take off, with the rights being passed around in Hollywood for nearly 20 years with high-profile names like Tom Cruise, Joss Whedon, and Quentin Tarantino attached to the project. Yet it is now Robert Downey Jr.'s work in *Iron Man* that is clearly linked to the film's success, and director Jon Favreau could not have chosen a better actor to portray the character. While being billed as a child-prodigy genius, Iron Man's alter ego Tony Stark is also an irresponsible playboy party animal, gambler, and alcoholic, and Downey's well publicized real-life struggles with similar issues made him a natural for the part, although these issues are not directly addressed in the film. Nevertheless, *Iron Man* marked the beginning of a huge comeback for the actor, who, in addition to signing on for the sequels, was featured in two other box-offices successes in 2008: *The Incredible Hulk* and *Tropic Thunder*. Critics were also enthusiastic about the film, and *Iron Man* was one of the best-reviewed movies of the summer.

Iron Man is a superhero origin story, and follows the basic mythology of the original series faithfully. Initially conceived as a character that would engage in Cold War issues from the perspective of the military-industrial complex, the title character debuted in 1963. Millionaire inventor and arms dealer Tony Stark becomes Iron Man after he is injured by one of his own land mines in Vietnam. In the film, the time and place are updated to the present and Afghanistan, respectively. This allowed Favreau and the production team to engage in the timeless themes associated with the character and his story, but also to showcase them through the contemporary global political scene. Stark transforms into an armored superhero even as he wrestles with the same problems as U.S. politicians and military forces deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan: when to take action, how to respond to terrorism, how to deal with civilian "human shields," how to keep U.S. weapons out of the wrong hands, duplicity by defense contractors and rapidly shifting alliances. It is in dealing with this conundrum that the character of Stark matures from the man-child he is at the beginning of the film.

In the film, it is not only Stark's run-of-the-mill conventional weapons, but also the top-of-the-line Jericho missile technology (a major plot point), and eventually, the Iron Man designs that are utilized by his enemies. While the members of the Ten Rings organization, led by Raza (Fahrin Tahir), are the terrorist-themed villains in the film, they take a back seat to Stark's primary nemesis, Obadiah Stane (Jeff Bridges). Stane is Stark's mentor and business partner who betrays him and ultimately appropriates the Iron Man technology to create his own powered suit of armor, the Iron Monger. Stane is motivated by both greed and a lust for power, but he does not run into problems with Stark until the latter develops a conscience after seeing his weapons used to kill U.S. troops. Stane's character also makes *Iron Man* a film about overcoming the expectations and the burdens of the previous generation, as Stane not only is of an older generation, but also is defined by his relationship with Stark's father, Howard. Ultimately, *Iron Man* is a film about responsibility, demonstrating that good intentions often result in negative consequences.

See also: Science Fiction Film, The

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—James M. Brandon

IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT. To the delight of movie audiences, Frank Capra released *It Happened One Night* in 1934. Although American viewers had been watching film comedies for two decades by the time Capra's film was released, *It Happened One Night* struck them in a surprisingly new way—not only was it funny, it was also wonderfully romantic. Along with two other films that debuted in 1934, Howard Hawks's *Twentieth Century* and W. S. Van Dyke's *The Thin Man*, *It Happened One Night* set the tone for a new type of genre film, the romantic comedy. Unlike other genre films that have evolved over time, the western and the war film, for instance,



Movie poster for director Frank Capra's film *It Happened One Night*, featuring actors Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert embracing on a crescent moon against a backdrop of stars. (Columbia TriStar/Getty Images)

romantic comedies have basically remained the same since they began to be made in the 1930s, almost always pairing a man and a woman who meet, fall in love, are kept apart, and finally come together by film's end. These pictures, it seems, have moved us for decades because they allow us to believe that there is, indeed, someone out there for each one of us, someone with whom we can live happily ever after.

The gifted Capra began making motion pictures in the early 1920s; he would go on to make over 50 films during his long and distinguished career. Capra worked across all genres, becoming a purveyor of populist cinema during the 1930s and '40s with pictures such as *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* (1936), *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939), and *Meet John Doe* (1941), as well as the most prominent film industry spokesperson for Franklin Roosevelt's post-Pearl Harbor, prowar message during the early 1940s—he actually volunteered to join the army and to make a pseudo-documentary series of combat pictures known collectively under the title *Why We Fight* (1941–1945). He also became familiar with cinematic romance, especially with its comedic dimensions, making pictures such as *That Certain Thing* (1928), *So This Is Love?* (1928), *The Matinee Idol* (1928), *Ladies of Leisure* (1930), and *Platinum Blonde* (1931) before turning his attention to *It Happened One Night*.

The film features Claudette Colbert and Clark Gable as Ellie Andrews and Peter Warne, unlikely romantic partners who are thrown together on a cross-country bus trip. Ellie is rich and only boards the bus to defy her father, Alexander Andrews (Walter Connolly), who has been keeping her under house arrest aboard his yacht in an attempt to keep her away from her fiancé, King Westley (Jameson Thomas). Literally diving overboard, Ellie swims ashore and begins a covert operation to get herself to New York City, where King awaits. Angry and embarrassed, her father posts her picture on the front pages of the nation's newspapers, seeking her return. Ellie makes her way to a bus station, where she convinces another passenger to buy her a ticket so that she will not be recognized.

We first encounter Peter at the bus station; drunk and surrounded by a cheering crowd of men, he is crammed into a telephone booth having a heated discussion with his newspaper editor. A talented, charming, rough-edged journalist, he has just lost his job after filing a story—while drunk—in a nonsensical free-verse form that his editor finds impossible to understand. Peter plays to the crowd of admirers, pretending that he quits his job and tells off his boss, even though his editor, unheard by the crowd on the other end of the phone line, has already fired him and hung up. Swaggering from the phone booth—quickly sobering up after being canned—Peter does not let on that he is now a little more than desperate. Fate intervenes, however. Noticing that Ellie's bag has been taken as she leans against the bus smoking a cigarette, Peter races by her and after the thief. Unable to catch him, Peter returns and informs Ellie what has happened. Instead of being appreciative, she dismisses him, apparently lumping him together with the riff-raff who stole her bag. Boarding the bus, the two are forced to sit together, much to Ellie's chagrin. Peter, though, eventually recognizes Ellie as the “runaway heiress,” and looking to resurrect his moribund career, he befriends the uneasy young woman, striking a bargain with her: he will get her safely to New York City if she agrees to give him an “exclusive” once she has been delivered over to her

fiancé. With few options left to her if she wants to avoid being returned to her father, Ellie agrees to Peter's conditions.

Typical of the populist fare released during the Depression years of the 1930s, much of the tension that arises between Ellie and Peter is the result of class differences. Ellie, of course, would never choose to ride a bus under normal circumstances, and has no sense of the blue-collar esthetic that marks her situation. When the bus stops for breakfast and the bus driver informs the passengers that they have 30 minutes before they must be back onboard, Ellie haughtily tells Peter that she is going into town to send a cable. When he informs her that she will never make it back in time, Ellie imperiously declares that the bus will wait for her. Of course it does not wait, but Peter is there to rescue her—both from her current precarious position and from her elitist sensibilities.

Capra masterfully sets the scenes in which Peter provides Ellie with her populist education—none more endearing than the one in which he teaches her the proper way to dunk doughnuts, something she has never had to learn, having had the advantage of being surrounded by servants her entire life. Ellie, though, is not without her own talents, as, after yet another round of instruction by Peter—this one related to how best to thumb a ride on the highway—she steps up, raises her skirt, revealing an extremely fetching leg, and succeeds in stopping a number of cars when Peter had failed to stop any. "Aren't you going to congratulate me?" asks Ellie. "For what?" responds Peter. "Well," says Ellie mischievously, "I proved once and for all that the limb is mightier than the thumb."

Forced to share a room at a "camp motel," Peter strings a rope from wall to wall and hangs a blanket over it—dubbing the setup the "Walls of Jericho." Ellie, naturally, is skeptical, unwilling to believe that a flimsy blanket will keep Peter on his side of the room. What keeps him in his place, though, Ellie comes to understand, is not any material barrier but a powerful sense of middle-class integrity. Peter, it seems, is more than meets the eye—as it turns out, he has the soul of a poet: "Who are you?" asks Ellie. "Who me?" responds Peter. "I'm the whippoorwill that cries in the night. I'm the soft morning breeze that caresses your lovely face."

As it turns out, their class differences almost succeed in driving them apart. As the film winds down, Ellie readies herself to marry King Westley, thinking that Peter wants nothing to do with her. Contacted by Ellie's father, Peter arrives at the Andrews estate, demanding that Mr. Andrews pay him back for what he had to spend on Ellie—it's the principle that is important, says Peter. Thinking that Peter has come after the \$10,000 reward Mr. Andrews has offered up for the return of his daughter, and surprised that Peter has rejected it, Mr. Andrews begins to understand the situation. "Do you love my daughter?" he asks Peter. "A normal human being couldn't live under the same roof with her without going nutty! She's my idea of nothing!" "I asked you a simple question," says Mr. Andrews. "Do you love her?" "Yes!" responds an exasperated Peter, "but don't hold that against me, I'm a little screwy myself." Exiting Mr. Andrews's study, Peter encounters Ellie—who mistakenly thinks that he has only come for the money. After trading insults, Peter storms from the house, and the wedding proceeds. While walking Ellie down the aisle, her father whispers to her: "You're a sucker to go through with this; that guy Warne is okay. He didn't want the reward. All he wanted was \$39.60, what he spent on you. Said it was a matter of principle." And so it is—principles

that Ellie, and her father, we hope, has done well to adopt. Having planted her car at the rear gate of the estate, Mr. Andrews convinces her to run—run to Peter if she wants to be happy! King Westley is paid off by Mr. Andrews, and, taking her father's advice, Ellie returns to Peter. In a final, magical scene shot from outside a camp motel room, we hear a horn blow, and we understand that the Walls of Jericho that have separated Ellie and Peter—and perhaps those that separate us from our loves—have come tumbling down.

See also: Romantic Comedy, The

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—Philip C. DiMare

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE. Based on the short story “The Greatest Gift,” by Philip Van Doren Stern, and directed by Frank Capra, *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946) is a morality tale about coming to terms with the hand dealt by fate, and finding value in even a seemingly unremarkable life.

The film is one of a number of supernatural dramas—films in which God, the Devil, and their associates intervene in the modern world—which became an established Hollywood subgenre by the mid-1940s. *Here Comes Mr. Jordan* (1941) and *Stairway to Heaven* (1946) both featured heroes precariously perched between life and death, and stories about souls poised between heaven and hell drove the plots of *Cabin in the Sky* (1943), *Heaven Can Wait* (1943), and *Between Two Worlds* (1944). Clarence, the “angel, second class” of *It's a Wonderful Life*, who rescues protagonist George Bailey, found cinematic company in Spencer Tracy's pilot-turned-angel from *A Guy Named Joe* (1943) and Jack Benny's heavenly trumpeter from *The Horn Blows at Midnight* (1945). Supernatural plot elements generally connoted comedy, or at least lightness of tone, but *It's A Wonderful Life* uses them to serve a more serious purpose. Capra's film treats heaven and hell less as places than as states of mind, and traces George Bailey's dawning comprehension that he has mistaken one for the other.

Throughout his life, George Bailey (James Stewart) has sacrificed his hopes and dreams for others. He has been the dutiful son, watchful brother, vigilant employee, devoted provider, concerned citizen, and dedicated community leader. As a young man, George spends his days dreaming of the world beyond his tiny community of Bedford Falls—grand places such as Europe, Tahiti, the Fiji Islands—and of building, creating, and “doing important things.” When his father suffers a fatal stroke, however, just when George is finally ready to leave Bedford Falls, he is drawn into the family business: the Bailey Building and Loan Association, the town's only alternative to the bank run by the venomous Henry Potter (Lionel Barrymore). He reluctantly abandons



Actors James Stewart and Donna Reed star in the Frank Capra film *It's a Wonderful Life*, 1946. (RKO Pictures/Archive Photos/Getty Images)

his dreams of travel and college, and—for the sake of his father's legacy, his younger brother Harry's (Todd Karns) education, and the community's well-being, and simply because it is the right thing to do—dedicates his life to the Building and Loan. Thanks to George's self-sacrifice, Harry goes on to college, marries, takes a profitable job away from Bedford Falls, and after being awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his military service, becomes the much-lauded hometown hero. George, meanwhile, carries on unnoticed, at least in his mind.

From his youth he has been captivated by Mary (Donna Reed), who, while capturing his heart, represents the small-town insularity and contentedness that he seeks to escape. Mary believes in his dreams, but her own are focused on marriage, a family, and remaining in Bedford Falls. At each critical juncture, the tug of responsibility threatens to sabotage their relationship: His father's death derails their first romantic encounter; a bank run robs them of their honeymoon; yet Mary continues to offer support. This, however, only reinforces George's self-loathing, for not being able to give himself, much less her, the life of which he dreams.

Tragedy strikes—just when things seem to be going well—when George's fumbling, lovable partner Uncle Billy (Thomas Mitchell) unwittingly hands a bank deposit of \$8,000 to Potter, which he keeps, realizing that the loss means ruin for the Bailey Building and Loan. A panicked George senses the imminent collapse of his life's work, lashes out at his family, and in desperation turns to Potter for a loan to cover the loss.

Potter refuses and taunts him: "You once called me a warped, frustrated old man. What are you but a warped, frustrated young man?" He chides George that with a \$15,000 insurance policy, he's worth more dead than alive.

Facing disgrace and ruin on Christmas Eve as a result of Potter's machinations, George contemplates suicide. He is interrupted (and thus saved) by his guardian angel, Clarence Odbody (Henry Travers), who shows him what Bedford Falls would have been had George never been born: a garish Babylon, firmly under Potter's control. In the scenes that follow, George comes to realize that a quiet life of sustained belief in humanity and community leaves a deeper mark on the world than one of personal achievement and superficial success.

Both director Frank Capra and star James Stewart had spent the war years in uniform, which may explain why *It's A Wonderful Life* has a darkness of tone that sets it apart from their prewar work. George Bailey—bitter, frustrated, and gripped by suicidal despair—is far removed from the callow innocents Stewart played in *Destry Rides Again* (1938), *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939), and *The Philadelphia Story* (1940). Capra, who had shown the Common Man triumphing in films like *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* (1936) and *Meet John Doe* (1941), as well as in *Mr. Smith*, imagined him crushed by the wealthy and powerful in the alternate-universe scenes. The film's tone was not its only wartime legacy, though. In the character of George Bailey, Capra created a figure for whom life has been a series of frustrated possibilities—plans thwarted, dreams deferred—that has finally taken its toll. Yet the message he receives from Clarence is that he has, in fact, had a *wonderful* life. In the film's closing scenes, he finds himself back in his real life, and considers it a miracle—Dickensian second chance. He is deliriously happy and grateful for even the direst consequences of his latest run of misfortune. He sees his life as a triumph. Only then does he find himself surrounded by those whose lives he has so positively affected. He has finally understood and accepted his lot, and discovered *community* as a result. For Capra, Stewart, and other members of the "Greatest Generation," George is admirable because his life was spent doing his part for the greater good. He does what needs to be done for those around him, despite the personal costs, and is rewarded in the end by the satisfaction that his small contributions to the world—the actions of a single man—have made a tangible difference in the lives of others.

Despite its poor box-office draw at the time of its release, *It's a Wonderful Life* has become a classic of the American screen, and an emotional touchstone for millions of viewers. Its televised version is a staple of holiday viewing, in much the same way as Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, which delivers a similar message. The American Film Institute (AFI) ranked *It's a Wonderful Life* at the top of its list of 100 Inspirational American Films, designating it the most inspirational film of all time. In so doing, however, the AFI is embracing and advocating a particular ideology of what it means to be a good person, a good community member, and a good American—an ideology that harkens back to postwar notions of the duty of the individual to society, and flies in the face of competing ideologies of meritocracy and American independence—granting it a quality of timelessness and fundamental applicability to all generations. Capra pits Bailey's downtrodden "everyman" against Potter's despicably self-centered

but successful entrepreneur, and finds the latter severely lacking, a strident critique of postwar progress that threatened the loss of small-scale communities with face-to-face economic interactions. The ideological chasm between the two characters is vast, and viewing audiences are tacitly urged to situate themselves with George, and against the era's impersonal march of progress.

It is not surprising that Capra tacitly asks audiences to make such a choice. The thread of making choices—of choosing sides—is central to the film and to the era from which it emerged. It firmly connects *It's a Wonderful Life* to the populism of Capra's prewar films such as *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* and *Meet John Doe*, in which principled individuals take stands against the wealthy, powerful, and corrupt. It echoes the ideological divisions that Capra had spent the war years addressing through the films of the “*Why We Fight*” series. And it prefigures the gulfs of politics and principle that would divide the country during the Red Scare—just beginning, in 1946, as the House Un-American Activities Committee was granted permanent status and Richard Nixon won election to the House by smearing his opponent, baselessly, as a communist. Capra understood, as audiences still haunted by the memories of World War II would have understood, that *It's a Wonderful Life* is a story about choices: throughout the film, George is asked “Which side are you on?” The life that he looks back on (first in despair and then in elation) is not an accident, but the sum of those choices. The overpowering joy that he feels in the final scenes comes from having been given the greatest gift of all: the knowledge that he chose well.

See also: Capra, Frank

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—Cynthia J. Miller and A. Bowdoin Van Riper

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JAWS. It is difficult to overstate the impact that Steven Spielberg's *Jaws* had on the American motion picture industry. Adapted from Peter Benchley's runaway bestseller of the same name, the film opened in June 1975 and became an instant hit, ushering in the ongoing era of the summer blockbuster. Critics of the movie argued that the release of *Jaws* marked the end of a golden cinematic period in Hollywood, one that had begun in the late 1960s with the release of *Bonnie and Clyde* and that saw the emergence of important American directors such as Arthur Penn, Francis Ford Coppola, Martin Scorsese, and Robert Altman. Defenders of *Jaws* argued that it was a carefully crafted piece of cinema that demonstrated Spielberg's mastery of the techniques of suspense.

The film stars Roy Scheider, Richard Dreyfuss, and Robert Shaw; however, the real "star" of the movie is the great white shark that menaces the beach resort of Amity Island. The plot is fairly simple. A shark begins attacking swimmers off Amity Island. First a young woman is attacked and killed at night. The second victim is a young boy swimming in the middle of the day on a crowded beach. The three protagonists include Amity's new police chief, Martin Brody (Scheider); a local professional shark hunter, Quint (Shaw); and a marine biologist, Matt Hooper (Dreyfuss). Much of the action takes place on Quint's boat, the *Orca*, as the three men try to find and kill the shark. The three characters complement each other. Quint is the hard-nosed shark hunter who reminds us a great deal of Captain Ahab, with his maniacal obsession with killing the great white; Hooper is the rational scientist; while Brody is the everyman-victim-of-circumstances who has to negotiate the tensions that arise between Quint and Brody.

Spielberg had constant problems with the mechanical shark he was forced to employ, which meant that he had to devise ways of allowing viewers to see the great beast without really seeing it. Utilizing the extraordinary score produced by John Williams—the film's theme music is instantly recognizable—and skillful editing, Spielberg cued audiences into the presence of the shark. Providing us only with glimpses of the animal—a vast, dark something slipping past the boat—we begin to sense that the shark has the advantage; as Brody says when the shark explodes from



Actors (from left) Richard Dreyfuss, Roy Scheider, and Robert Shaw onboard the *Orca* in a still from the film *Jaws*, directed by Steven Spielberg, 1975. (Universal Studios/Courtesy of Getty Images)

the ocean's inky depths, nearly taking him overboard: "We're gonna need a bigger boat!" What is most frightening about this shark, though, is not its enormous size but its seemingly humanlike capacity to think—something both Hooper and Quint understand in their own very different ways.

Although Hooper and Brody are finally able to kill the shark—Quint is ultimately devoured by the animal—and to make their way back to the safety of land, the film is not, perhaps, as redemptive as it first appears. While his critics have accused Spielberg of being an overly sentimental filmmaker—rightly so, it seems—they cannot deny that he knows how to make movies. All of his skills are on display in *Jaws*, as he is able to transfer the imagined horrors of Benchley's novel to the screen: trapped, as it were, in the unfamiliar, uncontrollable domain of some archetypal beast, we understand full well that we are subject to the forces of nature—or, perhaps, subject to the forces of our own natures.

Jaws would propel Spielberg toward becoming the most commercially successful director in Hollywood history. Although he would go on to make serious films such as *The Color Purple* (1985), *Schindler's List* (1993), and *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), he remains best known for the string of box-office, block-buster hits he has directed: *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977), *E.T.* (1982), the *Indiana Jones* films (1981–2008), and *Jurassic Park* (1993).

See also: Action-Adventure Film, The; Spielberg, Steven

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—Govind Shanadi

JAZZ SINGER, THE. History remembers *The Jazz Singer* (1927) as the first “talkie.” Roughly 18 minutes into the picture, star Al Jolson delivers the first spoken words in film: “Wait a minute, wait a minute, you ain’t heard nothin’ yet.” It was a sensation. But the technological innovation that distinguishes *The Jazz Singer* obscures the film’s historical value: today, it functions as a guide to a dynamic era in American history.

The Jazz Singer stars Al Jolson, a Lithuanian-born Jew who became the most popular entertainer of the early twentieth century. He started in a traveling minstrel group, rose through vaudeville, and eventually cracked Broadway. Often performing in black-face—a conspicuous aspect of his career but one common at the time—he helped introduce black music to white audiences. Considered lowbrow by polite society, Jolson nevertheless emerged as America’s greatest entertainer.

The film recounts the experiences of Jackie Rabinowitz, the son of a Jewish immigrant, as he emerges from the cloistered world of ethnic America to become a pop-culture sensation. The story begins as a silent film, with dialogue displayed through traditional intertitles. Jackie’s father is a cantor, a singer of Jewish devotionals, and expects Jackie to be the same. But Jackie wants to sing jazz. He runs away to make it big.

Jackie Rabinowitz changes his name to Jack Robin and begins performing locally, wowing audiences with his dynamic new sound. When Jack performs, the silent film becomes auditory. He meets a woman, rises through vaudeville, and catches his big break: a shot at Broadway. He returns home to visit his sympathetic mother, plays music for her, and, in the first spoken dialogue in film, promises to buy her a new home. As he performs an energetic rendition of Irving Berlin’s “Blue Skies,” however, his father enters and shouts “Stop!” The new world temporarily recedes before the old—the first talkie goes silent. The father banishes his son.

On the eve of his Broadway premiere, which coincides with Yom Kippur, Jack’s father falls ill. Will there be no cantor for the Jewish holy day? The elderly cantor has visions of Jack singing in his stead. Jack must choose between Broadway and the synagogue, between his father and the world. Jack fulfills his father’s wishes and sings “Kol Nidre” in the synagogue. The dying father hears his son’s voice, forgives him, and dies. Jack misses his premiere. But time passes, and Jack is again a jazz singer. In the film’s climactic scene, before a large audience, Jolson sings “Mammy” in blackface, in tribute to his mother.

The Jazz Singer was a great success, shattering all existing box-office records. Within mere years, the silent film had become an artifact. But the film’s significance extends beyond these accomplishments. It provides a useful glimpse into 1920s America, into the history of American entertainment, and into the history of race and American ethnic groups.



Al Jolson performs in blackface in *The Jazz Singer* in this July 2, 1946 photo. (AP/Wide World Photos)

For an era obsessed with immigration and assimilation, the story of Jackie Rabinowitz offers poignant commentary on American life in that time. The jazz singer, shorn of his ethnic roots and reborn as Jack Robin, strives to reconcile these two worlds. He navigates, tenuously, between the religious, ethnic world of his immigrant parents and the bright, dynamic, secular world of American entertainment. As Jack Robin rehearses his Broadway performance, his mother movingly acknowledges that “here he belongs. . . . He’s not *my* boy anymore—he belongs to the whole world now.” Moreover, Jack performs in blackface: a Jewish singer posing as a black man to gain the approbation of a secular, white America. The new forms of entertainment in the twentieth century—radio, film, television—were, slowly and unevenly, creating a mass culture. Ethnic whites were assimilating, united in their quest

for the American Dream, for material gain. The film’s use of dialogue allows Jack to give expression to the promises he makes to his mother: a new home, a new dress, a new American life—wishes spoken through a new American technology. When Jack’s father passes away, Jack has fulfilled his obligation to the past. At that point, he belongs, as his mother realizes, not to the American Jewish world but “to the whole world.”

The Jazz Singer is the quintessential film of the 1920s. It captures the creation of a mass American culture built around entertainment, race, and materialism, as well as the tensions inherent in assimilation. Its use of blackface, unsettling perhaps for modern audiences, further testifies to the link between film and its popular predecessors. As an historical memento and for its insights into American culture, it is invaluable.

See also: African Americans in Film; Ethnic and Immigrant Culture Filmmaking; Music in Film Sound

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—Joseph Locke

JERRY MAGUIRE. *Jerry Maguire* (1996) is a sports film focusing on the business side of the industry. Tom Cruise plays a disillusioned sports agent who ultimately loses his job when he attempts to instill a sense of ethics in the members of his firm—Sports Management International (SMI)—by writing a new company mission statement. Although many of his colleagues respect his effort, they also feel his ideas are unrealistic in the late twentieth-century marketplace.

When Jerry is forced to leave the firm—literally having to carry his belongings from his office as everyone looks on—he exhorts his colleagues to follow him; only Dorothy Boyd (Renée Zellweger in one of her early roles), a naive, idealistic, single-mother office assistant at the agency, joins him. On his own, Jerry is left with only two clients: a star college prospect, Frank Cushman (Jerry O’Connell), and a troublesome but talented veteran, Rod Tidwell (Cuba Gooding Jr.). Tidwell agrees to stay with Jerry—as long as he can “Show me the money!” “Cush” is closely watched over by his devoted father, Matt (an uncredited Beau Bridges), who initially likes Jerry’s personal approach, but finally decides that his son is better served by shifting over to another agent at SMI, the slick, ruthless Bob Sugar (Jay Mohr). Desperate, and realizing that Dorothy—and her young son Ray (Jonathan Lipnicki)—are now counting on him, Jerry seeks to negotiate a new contract for Tidwell.

Interestingly, Jerry and Tidwell have much to teach each other. Tidwell, angry and feeling underappreciated—even by Jerry—has become less than a team player. Sympathetic to what Tidwell is feeling, Jerry nevertheless points out that if Tidwell wants the big contract, he has to stop complaining and play the game. For his part, Tidwell realizes that Jerry’s ethical sensibilities notwithstanding, he has lost his sense of what Tidwell calls “kwan,” a sort of postmodern expression of care and concern for others. Both learn their lessons, and in the heartwarming denouement of this storyline, Tidwell proves himself on the field and Jerry is successful in securing him the multimillion-dollar deal both feel he now deserves. Other athletes, impressed with Jerry’s style—with his kwan—opt to leave SMI, and the fawning Sugar, and join Jerry at his new agency.

An indictment of the win-at-all-costs, me-first American marketplace and the world of spoiled athletes who believe that their extraordinary talents excuse them from their personal, familial, and communal responsibilities, *Jerry Maguire* is also a touching love story. After he is fired, Jerry’s fiancée, Avery (Kellie Preston), leaves him and he finds himself increasingly drawn to Dorothy. Dorothy, we realize, has harbored a secret crush on Jerry since they first met: “You had me at hello . . . you had me at hello,” Dorothy tells Jerry. Mirroring the relationship between Cush and his father, Dorothy is watched over by her

older sister, Laurel (Bonnie Hunt), who realizes that Dorothy must protect not only her heart but also the fragile emotions of her son. Although Laurel likes Jerry, she understands how dangerous he is for her sister. Jerry, though, comes to realize that he loves Dorothy —“You complete me,” he tells her—and he becomes a devoted husband and father.

Although some critics found the film overly sentimental and the relationship between Dorothy and Jerry unrealistic, audiences embraced the cinematic couple—the phrase “You complete me” appeared on the cards that accompanied countless bouquets of flowers. The film also had much to say about masculinity—especially as it was viewed through the lens of the hypermacho world of professional sports. In the end, Jerry becomes “the man he wants to be” by rebelling against a definition of masculinity based solely on financial success and trophy wives, choosing a different kind of love—kwan, as Rod Tidwell would say—caring and commitment to family, friends, and doing the right thing, even when it requires profound sacrifices.

See also: Romantic Comedy, The

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—Michael Faubion

JFK. Many have called the Academy Award-winning *JFK* (1991) “the most important political thriller of its time.” Centering on the real-life prosecution of New Orleans businessman Clay Shaw by District Attorney Jim Garrison as a co-conspirator in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963, the film was awash in controversy long before it was released. Aside from its financial and critical success, it is equally culturally important as the only Hollywood film to result in an act of Congress.

Oliver Stone directed the film, co-producing with A. Kitman Ho and co-writing the script with Zachary Sklar. Casting himself in the role of detective, Stone sought to piece together exactly what happened that day in Dallas. The primary story is based on two major works on the assassination: Jim Garrison’s *On the Trail of the Assassins* and Dallas journalist Jim Marrs’s *Crossfire: The Plot That Killed Kennedy*. Part of the controversy surrounding the film comes from the way Stone shot and cut the film, weaving real and fictional footage together so seamlessly that it blurred the line between fact and *faction*.

Starring Kevin Costner as New Orleans D.A. Jim Garrison and Tommy Lee Jones as the subject of his investigation, local businessman Clay Shaw, the film boasted a star-studded cast. The story tells the tale of the 1967–69 investigation and trial of Shaw. According to Garrison, Shaw was a CIA operative overseeing a team of assassins,



Scene from the 1989 film *JFK*, directed by Oliver Stone and starring Kevin Costner. (Photofest)

including both Lee Harvey Oswald and Jack Ruby, the man who had killed Oswald two days after the death of JFK. The film posits several scenarios for the assassination, ultimately concluding that Kennedy was killed primarily because of his weak stance against global communism by a cabal of operatives drawn from the CIA, the mafia, and the military-industrial complex. Before the trial begins, it becomes clear to Garrison that unknown persons, who he is convinced are government agents, are seeking to interfere with the district attorney's investigation.

The film—and the books on which it is based—sets out to discredit the so-called single-bullet, or “magic-bullet, theory” of the Warren Commission, which stated that only three shots were fired at President Kennedy, and that one of those bullets took a statistically unrealistic course through both the president and Texas governor John Connally, producing seven wounds with little effect on the bullet itself. Jurors in the original trial claimed they were convinced that a conspiracy had taken place, but not necessarily that Shaw was aware of or had taken part in it.

One of the criticisms of the film was that much of the evidence presented in the trial sequences actually did not come to light until well after the Shaw trial. Stone argued that the inclusion of this material in the film was necessary in order to prove to the audience the credibility of Garrison's arguments. Another element of the filmmaking process that many questioned was Stone's willingness to blur the boundaries between the real and the cinematic. Defending the process, Stone said that before every

narrative moment not supported by actual evidence, one of the film's characters would intone: "for a minute, speculate." What emerges is a brilliant piece of political drama, as well as a provocative piece of historical hypothesis.

The film succeeded in raising doubt about the legitimacy of the government's first "official" report of the assassination, the famous Warren Commission Report of 1964. Public outcry after the film became so pronounced that Congress was pushed to pass the JFK Act of 1992, calling for the creation of a team of historians to gather information currently available on the assassination. The resulting Assassination Records Review Board, working from 1993–98, meticulously gathered together every available document connected to the assassination, and pushed for the declassification of as many restricted documents as possible. In the end they succeeded in collecting more than five million documents surrounding the death of President Kennedy. Although many documents will remain classified until at least 2017, subsequent investigations of the infamous case, begun after Stone's film was released, have lent support to the theories offered up by the controversial director.

See also: Costner, Kevin; Politics and Film; Stone, Oliver

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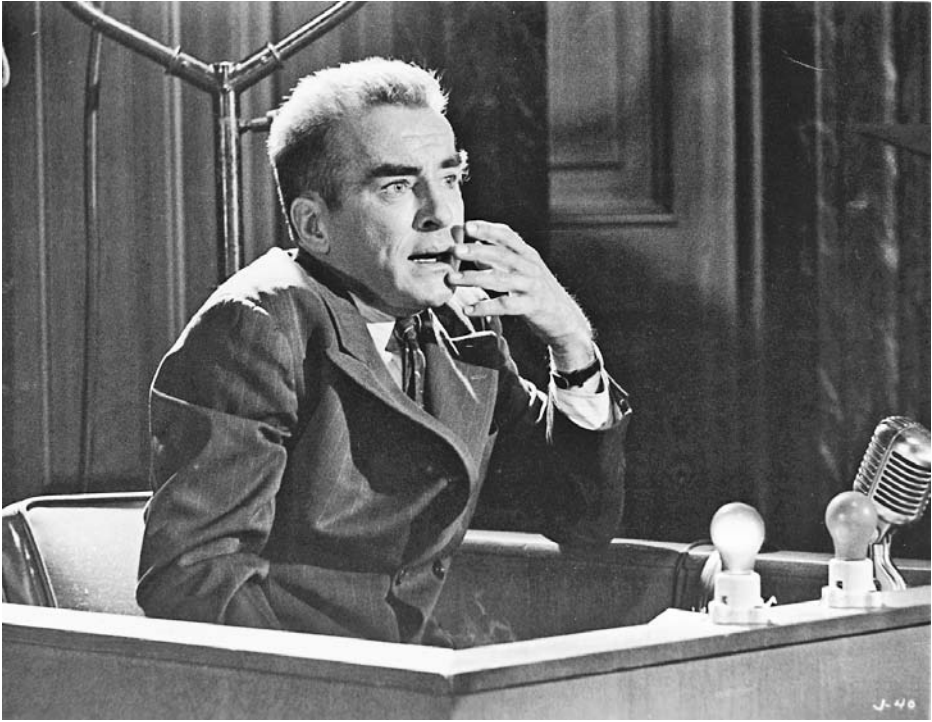
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—Richard A. Hall

JUDGMENT AT NUREMBERG. On the same day in 1961 when Adolph Eichmann was sentenced to death in Jerusalem for his role in the Holocaust, *Judgment at Nuremberg* premiered before American audiences (Gonshak, 2008). Director Stanley Kramer was already well known for didactic films, such as *The Defiant Ones* (1958) and *Inherit the Wind* (1960). Now he posed more difficult questions to film audiences: is resistance possible in a totalitarian regime, and what is the responsibility of ordinary citizens—not major war criminals—for genocide?

The Hollywood production of *Judgment at Nuremberg* featured popular stars: Spencer Tracy, Maximilian Schell, Judy Garland, Burt Lancaster, and Marlene Dietrich. The film was based on the play and television production of Abby Mann, who also wrote the script. It was a box-office success and won Academy Awards for Schell (Best Actor) and Mann (Original Screenplay).

Judgment at Nuremberg portrays the course of one of the lesser war crimes trials, that of German judges. It poses the problem of ex post facto law and the reach of international war crimes tribunals. Spencer Tracy, in the role of American judge Dan Haywood, presides over the trial of Ernst Janning (Burt Lancaster) and other judges who administered Nazi racial policy. The film is set in Nuremberg, the Bavarian city



Actor Montgomery Clift as Rudolph Petersen on the witness stand in a still from the film *Judgment at Nuremberg*, directed by Stanley Kramer. (United Artists/Courtesy of Getty Images)

known as the site of Nazi party rallies. This history is recalled as Judge Haywood takes a walking tour of the city. Defense counsel Hans Rolfe (Maximilian Schell) presents the case of decent men caught in the web of Nazi politics. His appeals on behalf of the aristocratic Minister of Justice, Ernst Janning, one of the authors of the Weimar constitution, powerfully pleads for understanding on behalf of all of the German people. Judy Garland plays Irene Hoffman, an Aryan woman tried for a race crime, an affair with a Jew, known as the Feldenstein case. It was Justice Janning who presided over this showcase trial, and he knew that both Irene and Herr Feldenstein, a Jewish family friend, were innocent. Judge Janning, widely respected among the German people, condemns Feldenstein to death and has Irene imprisoned. Later, he tells Haywood that he did not know his own judicial actions would “come” to mass executions. Haywood responds that it “came to it” the minute he sentenced to death a man he knew was innocent.

The film has a docudrama feel as the courtroom audience is presented with actual footage of the camps. Germans in the courtroom voice disbelief; could it really have been so atrocious? As millions of Germans would claim after the war, so too the characters in the film: we had no knowledge of the camps. The judges, the educated men who condemned their compatriots to death, defended their positions as men who

merely followed the rule of law and who fervently loved their country. Madame Bertholt (Marlene Dietrich), the aristocratic widow of a respected German general, presents the case of the cultured, sophisticated citizens who viewed the Nazis as thugs who had hijacked their nation. She decries the charge of collective guilt: Millions had not known of the camps, she argues, but were caught up in a personal war for survival, a struggle that continued among the ruins of postwar Germany. Haywood, wrestling with doubt, seeks empathy for these ordinary people. As the trial nears conclusion, the Berlin airlift begins and Haywood is counseled by other Americans that they will need Germans as friends now that they face the beginning of the Cold War. However, in his courtroom decision, the plain-speaking American judge upholds the value of human life and the burden of all decent people to resist inhumane policies. (Bradley)

When the film premiered in Berlin in 1961, the mayor of the city, Willy Brandt, commented: "I hope that world-wide discussion will be aroused by both this film and this city, and that this will contribute to the strengthening of right and justice" (Steffen, 2009). However, just as Judge Haywood was unsure, it may be that audiences were left with the impression that Germans were neither coming to terms with their past nor fully acknowledging their guilt.

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—Katharina Tumpek-Kjellmark

JURASSIC PARK. Adapted from Michael Crichton's novel, Steven Spielberg's mega hit *Jurassic Park* was released by Universal Studios in 1993. Interestingly, the innovative Spielberg used the latest technology to bring to the screen Crichton's cautionary tale about the danger of human beings seeking to control nature through the use of that very technology. The leading roles were filled by Sam Neill as paleontologist Dr. Alan Grant, Laura Dern as paleobotanist Dr. Ellie Sattler, Jeff Goldblum as mathematician Dr. Ian Malcolm, and Sir Richard Attenborough as financier John Hammond; supporting actors include Samuel L. Jackson, Wayne Knight, and B. D. Wong. The real stars, however, were the dinosaurs, which were cast in an eerie way as late twentieth-century representations of Frankensteinlike antagonists/victims.

The film opens dramatically with the gruesome death of a park worker on a mysterious island off Costa Rica, cuts quickly to a Caribbean amber mine, and then to a dinosaur dig in Montana. By the time John Hammond arrives at the dig, the essentials are in place: Hammond needs experts to conduct an inspection of his enterprise and sign off on it to avoid a lawsuit and keep his backers onboard. Once Hammond lures Grant

and Sattler with support for their research, the three join lawyer Donald Gennaro and chaos theoretician Malcolm for a trip to Jurassic Park, a vacation spot where the main attractions are dinosaurs cloned from DNA found in mosquitoes preserved in amber. Complications arise almost immediately from three sources: the greed of computer tech Dennis Nedry (Knight), who has arranged to sell dinosaur embryos to a competitor; the arrival at the park of Hammond's grandchildren; and a huge storm. As the "ride" begins—with electric cars on a track—things begin to go wrong almost immediately: one of the dinosaur exhibits has gone missing, and a triceratops has contracted a mysterious illness. Meanwhile, in order to accomplish his goals, Nedry shuts down security, including the electric fences separating dinosaurs from tourists. Although he dies a



Scene from the 1992 film *Jurassic Park*, directed by Steven Spielberg. (Photofest)

gruesome and, it seems, fitting death at the hands of the dinosaurs, Nedry has now blurred the boundaries between humans and beasts. Arguably the most heart-stopping scenes come when the loosed T-Rex finally appears, first as an ominous specter shaking the ground with its enormous weight as it makes its way toward its victims, then as an unstoppable force of nature. Chaos reigns for the majority of the film, with velociraptors emerging as the main villains due to their intelligence and killer instinct. After their harrowing experiences, all of the central characters escape the island.

Spielberg's filmic version of the story effectively combines the traditional "monster movie" with the literary and film tradition of the mad scientist trying to play God. Again, *Jurassic Park* is a warning about the dangers involved when human nature, with its corruption, ego, and greed, meets and tries to control a capricious Mother Nature. This message, explicitly articulated in the novel, is powerfully expressed in the film by Dr. Malcolm, who warns everyone that, "Life will not be contained. . . . Life finds a way." Malcolm is appalled at Hammond's "lack of humility" in cavalierly resurrecting animals that had, quite naturally, been long extinct before humans arrived on the scene. In this film, cloning provides the contemporary version of the science-run-amok motif, a topic that became increasingly relevant in the post-World War II world.

Although cloned sheep Dolly was yet to be produced, scientists cloned a tadpole in 1952, and the U.S. Human Genome Project began just as Crichton's book hit the stands.

Ironically, new technologies made possible this scathing critique. Spielberg wanted "animals, not monsters," and so his crew cleverly combined animatronics (such as those used in *Jaws*) with the newest in computer-generated imagery (CGI) interfaced with go-motion animation. The result was a film that was wildly popular with audiences worldwide: costing \$95 million to make, it grossed nearly ten times that much and collected dozens of award nominations. *Jurassic Park* earned a People's Choice Award for Favorite Motion Picture and three Academy Awards (Best Sound, Best Visual Effects, and Best Sound Effects Editing), while Spielberg, though not nominated for this film, took away Best Director and Best Picture Oscars the same year for *Schindler's List*.

See also: Science Fiction Film, The; Spielberg, Steven

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—Vicki L. Eaklor

KARATE KID, THE. Written by Robert Mark Kamen and directed by John G. Avildsen, *The Karate Kid* is a martial arts film released in 1984. A pop culture classic, the movie spawned three sequels and a loosely related animated spin-off series, although the first movie made the greatest impact on audiences.

The film follows the young Daniel LaRusso (Ralph Macchio) after he and his mother (Randee Heller) move to Los Angeles from New Jersey. Soon after arriving, Daniel meets an older, Japanese man, Mr. Miyagi (Pat Morita), who works as a handyman in the apartment complex he and his mother have moved into. Daniel quickly becomes the target of Johnny Lawrence (William Zabka), a bully who practices a brutal form of martial arts, against which Daniel is unable to defend himself. During one of the beatings inflicted on him, Mr. Miyagi steps in and easily defeats Johnny and his thuggish friends using his own form of martial arts. Daniel begs Mr. Miyagi to teach him how to fight. Although Mr. Miyagi finally agrees, what he really teaches Daniel is that the true martial artist is a practitioner of a spiritual art form—one learns how to fight, says Mr. Miyagi, so that one does not have to fight. Although there is a requisite climactic fight scene at the end of the film—Danny faces down Johnny at a martial arts tournament and defeats him—what Daniel learns about friendship, love, and family are the real lessons he takes from his teacher.

Wildly popular with audiences, *The Karate Kid* is a classic coming-of-age film. Daniel is just the sort of underdog character for whom Americans love to root. Aside from being beaten up by particularly violent high school bullies, Daniel is also the new kid in town struggling mightily just to fit in. He comes from a lower-class family, which he feels hinders him in establishing a relationship with Ali (Elizabeth Shue), a girl at school whose parents are wealthy. Daniel has much to learn, it seems, but he is surrounded by smart, capable allies who assist him in his existential journey.

Significantly, *The Karate Kid* is characterized by positive, well-rounded portrayals of minorities and women. Daniel's mother, for instance, is a hard-working single mom, who, although she is frustrated by Daniel's unwillingness to accept her help, maintains a positive and supportive attitude throughout the film. Ali is depicted as a level-headed and independent young woman while still being a likable and caring person. She may



Scene from the 1984 film *The Karate Kid*, directed by John G. Avildsen. (Photofest)

not necessarily need rescuing, but she appreciates Daniel's attempts, and remains a loyal friend despite what Daniel perceives as their insurmountable cultural differences. Mr. Miyagi, who initially appears to be little more than the stereotypic wise old Asian man, is revealed to be a character of great, even tragic depth, who has much to teach Daniel beyond just martial arts.

See also: Action-Adventure Film, The; Coming-of-Age Film, The; Sports Film, The

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—Benjamin O'Neill

KILLING FIELDS, THE. Roland Joffé's *The Killing Fields* (1984) depicts the horrors that occurred in Cambodia when it was ruled by the Khmer Rouge between April 1975 and January 1979. Based on a true story, the film is organized around the relationship between Sydney Schanberg (Sam Waterson) and Dith Pran (Haing Ngor). Schanberg, a *New York Times* reporter, was actually based in Cambodia and won a Pulitzer Prize for his reporting on the situation in Southeast Asia. Pran was a translator and aide to Schanberg from 1972 to 1975. Ngor, like Pran, himself a survivor of the

communist regime in Cambodia, was able to escape and became active in publicizing the horrors of the Pol Pot regime. The film was nominated for seven Academy Awards and won three, including Best Supporting Actor for Ngor.

The film begins in Cambodia in 1973, with Pran and Schanberg traveling to an area outside of the capital, Phnom Penh. There they see the damage caused by errant bombing by an American B-52. The early scenes show the tension between Khmer Rouge communists and the nationalist forces in Cambodia. The film suggests that covert American bombing in Cambodia, authorized by the Nixon administration during the final phase of the Vietnam War, destabilized the Cambodian government and radicalized the communist movement vying for power during the early 1970s. The film also suggests that the United States never fully acknowledged its complicity in this destabilization and did not do enough to assist the victimized Cambodian people.

Having set the tragic scene in Cambodia, the film shifts to April 1975, after the Khmer Rouge have defeated nationalist forces. Schanberg helps Pran's wife and children escape from the country, but he encourages Pran to remain in order to help him report on what is happening in the region. There are riveting scenes of young Khmer Rouge soldiers—some in their early teens—brandishing weapons and killing those who do not follow their orders. Pran is forced to plead with the soldiers to spare the lives of Schanberg and other journalists traveling with him. The Khmer Rouge government, known as Democratic Kampuchea, allows the foreign journalists, including Schanberg, to leave the country, but Cambodian citizens are detained.

Pran, like the nearly three million other residents of Phnom Penh, including the sick, are forced out of the city and into the countryside where work and reeducation camps are formed. The Khmer Rouge, whose leaders are known as the Angka, attempt to build a fully agrarian and self-sufficient political order. At the reeducation camp, Pran's voice-overs reveal that the Angka requires reeducation of anyone who was part of the elite classes in prerevolutionary Cambodia; because of this, Pran must pretend that he does not know English or French. Forbidden from growing food for themselves, the people in the camps are always close to starvation.

Schanberg is back in the United States during this time and doing what he can to encourage humanitarian groups to help find Pran. His actions, which prevented Pran from leaving Cambodia, weigh heavily on him, and when he accepts his Pulitzer he dedicates it to Pran. Pran is eventually able to escape his captors; but while making his way through a series of tributaries and marshes, he finds himself in the midst of a vast area filled with human remains: tragically, the rice fields have now become the "killing fields."

Pran is finally captured by another member of the Khmer Rouge, a leader of a prison compound. Pran cares for this man's child and gains the man's confidence. When the fighting between Cambodia and Vietnam spills over into this area, Pran is able to escape and eventually reaches an international Red Cross station. Once safely out of Cambodia, he is reunited with his family and Schanberg. In the end, Schanberg wants to apologize to Pran, but Pran assures him that no apology is needed.

Obviously, no single film can adequately explore the complex issues that surrounded the period of communist rule in Cambodia—Pol Pot's killing fields,

America's involvement in Vietnam, and its covert activities in Cambodia during the Nixon years—but Joffé's *The Killing Fields* is certainly notable for its attempt to disclose the actions of a brutal regime and to depict the unique friendship that emerged and was sustained during and after that tragic era.

See also: War Film, The

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—Michael L. Coulter

L.A. CONFIDENTIAL. *L.A. Confidential* (1997), directed by Curtis Hanson and adapted by Hanson and Brian Koppelman from a novel by James Ellroy, adds another dimension to the category of the “urban noir” film. Both book and movie evoke a Los Angeles that exists—if it ever existed at all—only in the memory and in the smudged newsprint of discarded scandal sheets and police blotters. Ellroy and Hanson both see their native town with a sort of double vision—from the perspective of the children they once were and from that of the artists they have now become.

Both novel and film are set in the years immediately after World War II. Los Angeles has one foot lightly planted in the fairyland of Hollywood movies and booming urban optimism, while the other foot is buried in the mire of personal and public depravity. As the expanding city sheds its small-town skin, rampant corruption erodes the ranks of the police force, gossip tabloids expose the sleazy underbelly of the film colony, and urban development scars the area with a new freeway system. There is even a prostitution ring whose women have been transformed by cosmetic surgery into the likenesses of Hollywood glamour queens such as Marilyn Monroe and Veronica Lake.

Striding through this milieu of the New Arabian Nights—blended into a factual background brimming with references to real-life figures like Mickey Cohen, Robert Mitchum, Johnny Stompanato, Veronica Lake, and Lana Turner—are a gallery of colorful fictional characters, including Lynn Bracken (Kim Basinger), a beautiful woman whose resemblance to Veronica Lake qualifies her as a member of a very exclusive call-girl ring; and four L.A. policemen investigating a string of unsolved murders—Captain Dudley Smith (James Cromwell), an authoritative minion of the law with a secret in his past; Ed Exley (Guy Pearce), a straight-arrow cop obsessed with doing things by the book; Bud White (Russell Crowe), a one-man vigilante squad pursuing his own personal sense of justice; and Jack Vincennes (Kevin Spacey), a smooth-talking celebrity hound who pursues an unholy alliance with tabloid gossipmonger Sid Hudgens (Danny DeVito). While we watch them sift through the facts and fictions of the case, we discover they, too, conceal their own secrets and hidden selves.

Los Angeles and its secrets are writer James Ellroy’s great subject. His mother was murdered there near her El Monte, California, home in 1958, propelling the

10-year-old Ellroy into a downward spiral of sex, drugs, and violence. "The event distilled in me an obsession with all things criminal and violent," he recalls. "I was completely perverted. I drank, used drugs, broke into rich people's houses, sniffed underwear, and went to jail." But the self-styled "Demon Dog of American Crime Fiction" pulled himself out of his private morass when, at age 31, he left L.A. and began writing a series of highly successful, densely packed detective noirs, including the "L.A. Quartet" cycle—*The Black Dahlia* (based on an unsolved 1947 murder case), *The Big Nowhere*, *L.A. Confidential*, and *White Jazz*. "Everything I have written comes from the violence and dislocation of my childhood. Back then L.A. cops were providing the scandal sheets with the inside skinny on Hollywood celebrities caught with their pants down. Some were caught at all-male tomcat houses; others were busted for dope; and there were homosexuals, nymphomaniacs, drunks, sadists, peepers, prowlers, perverts, panty-sniffers, punks, and pimps. The L.A.P.D. busted them all and fed the information to the scandal rags. In my novel, *L.A. Confidential*, and now in the film, you can see all this in the characters."

Director Hanson was already familiar with the Los Angeles that Ellroy knew so well. Indeed, he grew up near Ellroy, in the Wiltern neighborhood at Wilshire and Western. For him, as well as for Ellroy, the project represented the chance to return to some of the lost places of his youth, even though they too proved elusive and difficult to trace. "The city I come from is a city of manufactured illusions," says Hanson. "It has no respect for its own past. Some neighborhoods I once knew now look like they're in another country, or on another continent. L.A. is famous for that, for just building itself up and tearing itself down just as quickly." It was Hanson's shared obsession with Ellroy in revisiting—and reconstituting, when necessary—the lost Los Angeles of his boyhood that gives the film its special credibility. Hanson is particularly proud of the title credit that reads, "Shot on location in Los Angeles, California." He boasts that, except for two computer-enhanced shots, the entire movie cleaves closely to the residue—the physical evidence, as it were—that remains from 1953. "It's true that L.A. is famous for tearing things down, like the freeways that bulldozed much of it into oblivion. But L.A. is still there. You can see what you want to see. It's like looking at one of your favorite movies when it comes to television: If you look past all the commercials and distractions, you can still recognize it. L.A. is that way. There were many things starting up then—television, tabloid journalism, the freeways. They're still with us, even though much of the dream of L.A. was bulldozed into oblivion by freeway construction."

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—John C. Tibbetts

LAND BEYOND THE SUNSET, THE. Written by Dorothy Shore, *The Land Beyond the Sunset* (1912) offered early twentieth-century audiences a parable about humans and their connection to nature. Thomas Edison's film company produced the 14-minute silent film in collaboration with the Fresh Air Fund, a popular charity focused on temporarily transporting tenement children to the country for physical, mental, and moral improvement. The film remained virtually unknown until voted into the National Film Registry in 2000.

The film follows the arc of an urban boy's tribulations on the streets of New York, through his experience of a Fresh Air excursion to the country, to his salvation in the bosom of a healthy and hospitable countryside. With evangelical energy, the camera crew's lights illuminated for audiences the dark recesses of tenement squalor and used the symbol of the shining sun to suggest solutions to societal issues. Plot elements and production values converged around the idea that nature-based social reform could mitigate urban problems. Breaking conventions of social realism with stylistic flourishes, the Edison production suggested a world beyond convention: artistic passage to a better society through the gateway of philanthropic service. The lyrical short depicted Fresh Air reform with documentary value and artistic flair.

The opening sequence immediately draws the audience into the dilemma of urban poverty and its deleterious effect on children. A bedraggled Joe (played by child actor Martin Fuller) peddles newspapers against a black backdrop. Lyrics to a plaintive lullaby croon "somewhere the sun is shining," while the boy's posture conveys dejection commensurate with a disappointing bundle of unsold newspapers in his clutch. A camera dissolve locates Joe on a recognizable New York City street, finding no success capturing the attention of passersby, until a woman stops to hand him a ticket for a Fresh Air excursion.

Joe's delight is quickly quashed in the next scene when his drunken grandmother (actress Mrs. William Bechtel) berates him for coming home to her disorderly apartment without money to sustain her drinking habit. She departs with his meager earnings, leaving him bereft and weeping against the closed door. The jaunty rhythm of a piano riff accompanied by a hopeful hymn promises "there is a happy life far, far away," and triggers a rapid scene change to the bustling office of a Fresh Air agency. Two women burst through the clearly labeled office door of the Fresh Air Fund, where a minister distributes excursion tickets, nodding enthusiastically to a steady stream of volunteers.

A scene title page announces the arrival of a pivotal plot point: "The morning of the picnic." Knowing his grandmother would never permit him a day free from hawking newspapers, Joe fondles the Fresh Air ticket and hatches a plan. He sneaks out while his guardian sleeps, and joins a crowd of children boarding a train for the countryside outing. Another title card informs viewers to pay attention to "His first sight of the world beyond the slums." A rolling, open field dotted with white flowers fills the frame for a reflective moment before the children rush forward in unfettered frolic. Adult escorts point out all the wonders of nature around them. At the minister's urging, the children gather round to offer prepicnic thanks and to hear a fairy tale under the aegis of a large shade tree.

The camera fades to a reenactment of the fairy tale. A boy named Jack escapes the abuses of a wicked witch (warts and all) by seeking refuge with a small band of winged fairies. The costumed crew of woodland spirits usher him to a boat waiting on the shore, and send him off along a path of shining light to a “land beyond the sunset.” In a moment of modernist filmic sensibility, the fairies all turn and face the camera in unison, suggesting with a glance that the viewers, too, must assist in sending the children to a better place—an appeal consistent with Progressive-Era reform.

A sharp scene transition refocuses on the picnic children listening intently to the conclusion of the fairy tale. Joe sits in a daze. Memories of violence and neglect swarm above him, represented by the ghostly image of his grandmother hovering nearby. While the other children ready to depart, Joe dodges the crowd and hides behind a small cottage. He wanders tentatively toward the ocean, passing beneath the threshold of a large bough. The camera follows him along the water’s edge until he finds an abandoned boat. He looks at the Fresh Air ticket in his hand and points toward the boat with an “a-ha” gesture of realization, making the connection between Fresh Air outings and his salvation as clear for the audience as it is to his weary mind. Joe heaves the boat from shore and floats toward the horizon. Waves carry the vessel and its cargo toward the setting sun.

Although it is never clear whether Joe drifts toward his salvation or a fantasyland beyond the sunset, it is clear that the Fresh Air Fund infused the film with a powerful message about nature’s role in galvanizing morality and civic duty. Not only did the closing “long shot” of Joe’s disappearance in the distance evoke nature’s ability to provide safe haven from urbanization’s problems, it promised a new beginning for both Joe and the viewing audience in the great thereafter.

Stylistic techniques such as the opening appeal to the audience, the explicit eye contact of magical woodland creatures, and the final poetic gesture toward the afterlife all highlight the primary message of the Fresh Air Fund’s foray into film: nature, infused with a religio-civic humanitarianism, might provide a solution to the social problems of the day.

See also: Silent Era, The; Coming-of-Age Film, The

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—Barry Ross Muchnick

LAST PICTURE SHOW, THE. Based on the novel by Larry McMurtry, *The Last Picture Show* (1971) explores the lives of a group of people in a dying Texas town (named Thalia in the book and Anarene in the movie) in a vanishing age in early 1950s America. Its 1971 opening at the New York Film Festival caused a sensation, and the picture was nominated for eight Oscars, winning for Best Supporting Actor (Ben Johnson) and Best Supporting Actress (Cloris Leachman). The film was also one of the first to use a soundtrack entirely made up of pop songs (Ebert, 2004).

During an era when Hollywood was seeking to portray the nation's counterculture and its rejection of what it considered the vacuous materialism of the times, director Peter Bogdanovich offered up his own scathing critique of 1970s America by turning the clock back to what seemed a more reassuring and comforting period in our history. Conceiving his film as a cinematic homage to directors like Howard Hawks and John Ford—whose movies he felt captured both the real and imagined grandeur of the American West—Bogdanovich shot his picture in black and white, giving it a spare, hopeless quality. Anarene is characterized by barren, small-town streets and decaying buildings that are perpetually assaulted by harsh winds and hot sun. Even the interiors of the buildings reflect a sense of loss and decay—especially the billiard parlor of Sam the Lion (Ben Johnson), which contains only empty cases, a solitary cooler, and an aging pool table. The homes are not in any better condition, nor is the high school where the only thing that seems to matter is devotion to Texas and whether or not the football team will ever win again. Hovering over the town is the Royal Theater, a symbol of hope and redemption for the townspeople, but in reality a haunting specter of the community's once glorious past as well as its doomed future.

The film begins in late 1951 and follows the lives of two high school football players, Sonny (Timothy Bottoms) and Duane (Jeff Bridges). While Duane sets his sights on Jacy (Cybill Shepherd), the daughter of the richest family in town, Sonny ends up having an affair with Ruth (Cloris Leachman), the wife of the football coach. Beyond the town itself, which Bogdanovich gives an eerie, almost organic feel, two figures are elemental to the picture's narrative flow. Sam the Lion is the community's connection to the past—during the film we find out that he had a passionate affair with Jacy's mother, Lois (Ellen Burstyn)—while young Billy (Sam Bottoms), who spends most of his time sweeping dust off of Anarene's dirty streets, represents its stultifying present. All the characters seek escape in their own way: Ellen seems content with drinking her life away in relative comfort while carrying on an affair with her husband's foreman; Duane eventually enlists in the army and is sent to Korea; Jacy uses sex as she coldly teases first Duane and then Sonny; Sonny and Ruth ultimately find comfort in each other's arms; and, in cruel twists of fate, Sam the Lion dies of a heart attack while young Billy loses his life when he is struck by a car. Only Genevieve (Eileen Brennan), a waitress, seems to possess a spark of life—and perhaps the possibility of transcending her situation. In the end, the death of Sam while Duane and Sonny are on a road trip to Mexico signals the beginning of the end for the town, as the Royal Theatre eventually closes—the last picture show.



Scene from the 1971 film *The Last Picture Show*, starring Timothy Bottoms and Cybill Shepherd. Directed by Peter Bogdanovich. (Photofest)

Besides the innovative use of popular songs (primarily country-western) in the musical score, *The Last Picture Show* was significant in other ways. With the exception of Ben Johnson, Bogdanovich purposely used young, unknown actors and actresses. The movie served as a breakout vehicle for Bridges, Leachman, and Shepherd. The issue of the seduction of young man by an older woman, while dealt with tenderly, ultimately unsettled viewers. Finally, Cybill Shepherd's seductive striptease, performed on a diving board in front of a group of young men and women who are nude, was considered radical for the time.

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—Charles Johnson

LEAN ON ME. *Lean on Me* (1989) follows a Paterson, New Jersey, high school principal who attempts to reform a troubled, inner-city school by implementing controversial but ultimately extremely effective policies. Loosely based on the story of “Crazy Joe” Clark, a committed New Jersey educator, the film was directed by John G. Avildsen, the Academy Award-winning director of *Rocky* (1976) and *The Karate Kid* (1984), two other films in which an “underdog” triumphs over seemingly insurmountable odds.

Significantly, the narrative flow of *Lean on Me* is similar to those of other films released during the 1980s and 1990s that dealt with educators challenging “the system”: the brilliantly titled *Children of a Lesser God* (1986), for instance, which starred Marlee Matlin and William Hurt; *Stand and Deliver* (1988), with Edward James Olmos playing East L.A. math teacher Jaime A. Escalante; *Dead Poets Society* (1989), starring Robin Williams as a nontraditional instructor who returns to teach at the staid, oppressive boys’ school from which he graduated; and *Dangerous Minds* (1995), with Michelle Pfeiffer playing “Lou Anne Johnson,” a former marine who reaches her culturally and emotionally dispossessed students by teaching them about both Bob Dylan and Dylan Thomas.

Lean on Me opens with a fight scene at Eastside High School. The school’s principle, attempting to stop the fight, is brutally beaten. Desperate, the Superintendent of Paterson Public Schools, Dr. Frank Napier (Robert Guillaume), decides to hire Joe Clark as Eastside’s new principal. Napier, along with the mayor of Paterson (Alan North), is ambivalent about hiring Clark, who already has established a reputation as being an effective if overzealous educator. Eastside, however, has been plagued by violence, drugs, vandalism, and low tests scores, and when the state of New Jersey threatens to take over the school, Napier and the mayor put aside their reservations and bring Clark aboard.

During his first week on the job, Clark decides to expel 300 Eastside students for various infractions. This causes a great deal of tension among Clark, his teachers, the parents, Napier, and the mayor. Clark eventually goes so far as to place chains on the school’s doors in an attempt to keep “the drug dealers out”; he also begins to carry a baseball bat that he makes clear he will use in order to impose his will—“they can call me batman,” declares Clark. Although he is a no-nonsense administrator, Clark is also a compassionate educator who slowly wins the hearts of his students. When their principal is jailed for violating the city’s fire codes by placing chains and locks on the school’s doors, Eastside’s students march on the central office of the Paterson Board of Education, demanding that he be released and reinstated. They, at least, realize that Clark is someone on whom they can lean.

Representative of 1980s and ’90s coming-of-age films set in beleaguered high schools, *Lean on Me* presented audiences with a charismatic protagonist who was at once a rigid, Reaganesque disciplinarian and a noble, socially minded reformer. Joe Clark, who published his book *Laying Down the Law* the same year *Lean on Me* was released, went on to become an educational advocate and motivational speaker.

See also: Coming-of-Age Film, The



Scene from the 1989 film *Lean on Me*, starring Morgan Freeman (far right) as Principal Joe Clark. Directed by John G. Avildsen. (Photofest)

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—Hettie Williams

LEFT HANDED GUN, THE. *The Left Handed Gun* (1958) was the first feature film of American director Arthur Penn, whose major works, including *The Miracle Worker* (1962), *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), and *Little Big Man* (1970), helped to facilitate the transition in American filmmaking from the studio system to the postclassical era of the New Hollywood. With the advent and growing popularity of television hastening the decline of the movie industry's golden age in the 1950s, Penn, a successful young Broadway stage and television director, was hired to direct this Warner Bros. project.

The Left Handed Gun was derived from actual historical events, the last three years of the life of William Bonney, better known as "Billy the Kid," a gunfighter who came to prominence during the 1870s. Paul Newman, with whom Penn had worked at the Actors Studio and whom Penn had directed in television productions, was chosen to play William Bonney. (Newman had been slowly establishing himself as a film actor during the 1950s, but 1958 would prove to be a breakout year for the talented,

extraordinarily handsome young performer. In addition to his masterfully played role in *The Left Handed Gun*, Newman also starred that year in *The Long Hot Summer*, *Rally 'round the Flag Boys*, and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*.) Shot in black and white on a shoestring budget, the film was made in a mere 23 days, entirely on Warner property in Southern California. *The Left Handed Gun* received little critical attention when it was released, and was a box-office failure in America, where it survived as the bottom half offering of theatrical double bills. Interestingly, however, it was recognized for its creative artistry in Europe, particularly in France and Belgium, where it won the Belgian Film Critics Prize for Best First Picture.

Although *The Left Handed Gun* was based on people, places, and events from the past, it clearly reflected and addressed contemporary social issues that existed in America in the 1950s. This decade was marked by a post-World War II economic prosperity, the growth of the middle class and suburbia, and the emergence of a certain paranoia and pressure to conform in the face of the threat of Cold War communism. In this environment a “generation gap” began to emerge between older, more conservative members of the “establishment”—parents, politicians, even teachers, anyone over the age of 30—and restless American youth who sought greater freedom than their elders allowed. Focusing on these 1950s tensions, Penn depicted Billy as an emotionally underdeveloped, disaffected young man at odds with the social order of the day. In Penn’s hands, then, William Bonney was, in many ways, a typical teenager, acting and reacting impulsively with little or no self-control, often expressing his feelings violently and without considering the consequences of his actions.

Befriended by an English merchant and cattle rancher, Mr. Tunstall, William is put to work driving cattle to market in Lincoln, New Mexico Territory. The wayward William is warmly taken under Mr. Tunstall’s wing, as this caring substitute father begins to show an interest in William’s views, even offering to teach him to read. Unfortunately for William, Tunstall is murdered by four Lincoln townspeople seeking to prevent his prospective cattle sale from depressing market prices for their own cattle. Distraught, William reacts in the only way he knows: He seeks to avenge the murder of his surrogate father by hunting down and killing the four men involved in Tunstall’s death; in his mind, he is effecting justice rather than committing murder. The plan, though, endangers not only his intended victims but also his own friends and loved ones; it also threatens the amnesty proclaimed by the territorial governor, who is seeking to restore peace to the community.

Although order ultimately prevails in the picture—in the end, Billy dies at the hands of Sheriff Pat Garrett—it is an order that is always and everywhere fragile, unstable, and possibly immoral. Penn acknowledged that his portrayal of Billy the Kid was inaccurate and completely fanciful. In his account, Penn was determined to leave William trapped in a perpetual adolescence—literally Billy the “kid”—who longs for the father he never had. Defining a narrative space in which a delicate balance exists between fanciful play and sudden, disturbing violence, Penn was especially interested in exploring the relationship between myth and reality. Through the character Moultrie, the “yellow journalism” reporter who skews and exaggerates Billy’s exploits and

feeds the Eastern news machine with stories that make the Kid a nationally recognized figure, Penn sought to reveal both America's perverse need to create heroes as well as the potentially devastating consequences that may result when those mythical figures inevitably fail to live up to our unrealistic, idealized images of them.

Significantly, *The Left Handed Gun* may be understood as a revisionist western that departs from the traditional characterization of cowboys and settlers as virtuous pioneers who tamed the frontier during the second half of the nineteenth century. At the time Penn made *The Left Handed Gun*, westerns—with a few exceptions such as the complex westerns of Anthony Mann, Samuel Fuller, and Nicholas Ray featuring morally dubious heroes—had, for the most part, been conceived as action films that included a great deal of bloodless gunfighting between clearly defined white-hatted heroes and black-hatted villains. Two years before Penn made *The Left Handed Gun*, however, John Ford, who many considered the father of the film western, made *The Searchers*, an unsettling, nontraditional character study that featured the iconic John Wayne as the violently pragmatic Ethan Edwards, whom we come to understand is not seeking to rescue his niece from Indians but is tracking her down in order to kill her because she has been despoiled by her contact with these heathens. Following Ford, Penn turned *The Left Handed Gun* into a powerful psychological examination of a misunderstood historical figure. In Penn's hands, Billy the Kid became a complex, troubled man-child, for whom we feel a great deal of compassion. In this way, Penn successfully challenged viewers' expectations and traditional attitudes about heroism, villains, violence, and courage.

On the last day of filming, Penn was told by the studio that he would not be doing the final edit for *The Left Handed Gun*. He was greatly disappointed, disagreed with the ending the studio created for the film (which focused on Garrett rather than Billy), and generally described his first experience in cinema as unpleasant. Although disillusioned by the experience of bringing *The Left Handed Gun* to the big screen, a decade later, Penn would go on to direct *Bonnie and Clyde*, one of the most important American films ever made. One of a handful of directors who came to define the first wave of independent filmmaking that extended from the late 1950s into the 1970s, Penn used his unique cinematic style to deconstruct popular myths and conventional notions about movies.

See also: Newman, Paul; Penn, Arthur; Western, The

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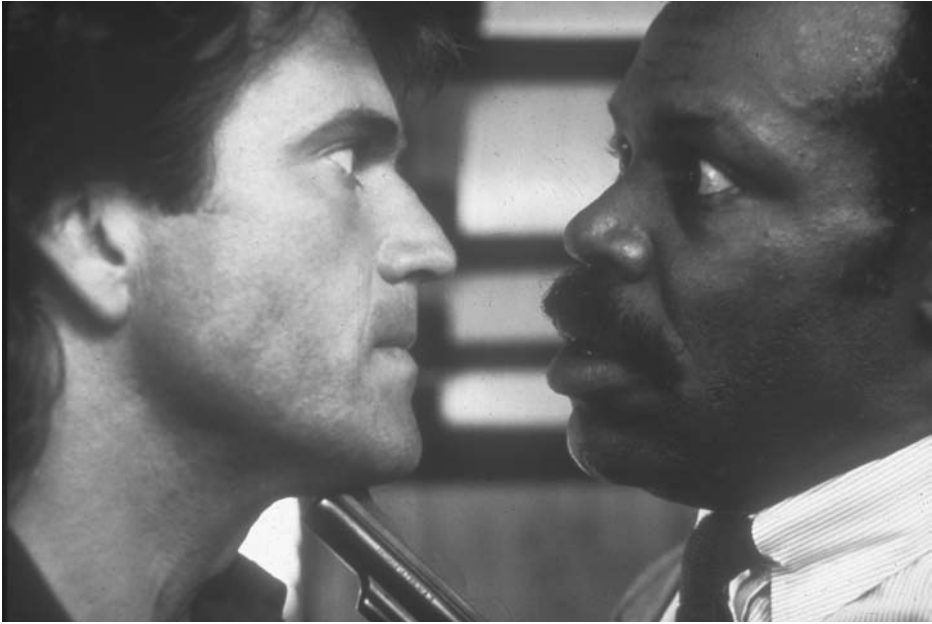
—J. Bruce McGee

LETHAL WEAPON. A box-office hit when it was released in 1987, *Lethal Weapon* spawned three successful sequels. Viewed by most American audiences as merely another action-adventure picture, it was characterized by some critics as quintessential Reaganite cinema, as it reflects (and helped to shape) a political and cultural shift to the political Right. It has even been suggested that its sequential nature is expressive of certain Reaganite themes: a desire for constancy in a decade of recuperation from the anxieties raised by 1960s and '70s radicalism; attempts to reassert racial integration in response to the threat of Black Power movements; a shift back to patriarchal values in response to feminism; and a push to reestablish a law-and-order sensibility in a nation plagued by urban crime, disrespect for authority, and liberal permissiveness (Wood, 2003).

Central to the narrative flow of *Lethal Weapon* is the relationship between two vastly different LAPD officers: black sergeant Roger Murtaugh (Danny Glover) and white sergeant Martin Riggs (Mel Gibson). Initially indifferent to each other—both would much rather work alone—they gradually develop not only a strong partnership but also an enduring friendship. It may be argued that their unusual union, and Murtaugh's middle-class success, reflect both a desire for racial integration—black and white can be reconciled, despite America's past racial hostilities—and a Reaganite preference for a color-blind but strictly ordered meritocracy. To be sure, America interpreted this integrative process very differently. Liberals tended to view this 1980s version of meritocratic integration as yet another example of forced assimilation into *white* society—and thus a reassertion of white cultural norms and values that acted to subjugate an historically repressed black community. Conservatives, on the other hand, tended to view the process as an example of assimilation into *American* society—and thus an adoption of traditional norms and values that would free the black community from the shackles of a socially engineered welfare state ushered in by liberal politicians intent on codifying preferential treatment for racial minorities.

Lethal Weapon also reflects a hope for the reassertion of patriarchy. The film's antagonists (the drug dealers) are a threat to the family—most explicitly when they kidnap Murtaugh's daughter Rianne (Traci Wolfe). Murtaugh must save his helpless daughter and protect his family. More generally, *Lethal Weapon* reveals a concern with crime, especially crime related to an urban environment, and more specifically to drugs, which Reagan identified as a principal threat to the family and American society. *Lethal Weapon* can be seen as a cinematic war on drugs. When Murtaugh and Riggs realize the extensive power of the drug dealers (they have corporate cover), their professional expertise (they are not merely Vietnam vets but ex-special forces), and that they have declared war on them (they try to kill Riggs and kidnap Rianne), they return the favor, waging an unlimited war against the drug dealers. The war reflects not only a reaction against supposed liberal weakness against crime, but also a morally unambiguous view of law and order—another Reaganite or rightist view.

Lethal Weapon may also be seen as an (urban) western. The urban environment has become the frontier; civilization has receded. The drug dealers operate outside of the law and must be eliminated and civilization restored by gunmen who also must become a law unto themselves. Rianne's capture is a threat not merely to the family but to civilization, which she represents; and to save her is to reestablish civilization.



Scene from the 1987 film *Lethal Weapon*, starring Mel Gibson (left) and Danny Glover. Directed by Richard Donner. (Photofest)

The Vietnam War also permeates the movie, still lurking and haunting Americans; especially their fear of violent veterans. The principal characters, good and bad, are all Vietnam veterans. The drug dealers, employing their military skills for evil purposes, threaten society. And if Murtaugh is a well-adjusted veteran, his partner Riggs, while the protagonist, is still a “lethal weapon.”

See also: Gibson, Mel; Hard-Boiled Detective Film, The

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—Mark D. Popowski

LETTERS FROM IWO JIMA. *Letters from Iwo Jima* is Clint Eastwood’s companion piece to his *Flags of Our Fathers*. Released in 2006, the two films represent Eastwood’s attempt to reimagine the traditional World War II combat picture. While *Flags of Our Father* explores the real-life drama that surrounded the publication of



Ken Watanabe in a scene from the movie *Letters from Iwo Jima*, directed by Clint Eastwood. (AFP/Getty Images)

Joe Rosenthal's iconic photograph of the American flag raising on Mount Suribachi during the Battle of Iwo Jima, *Letters from Iwo Jima* shifts perspectives, focusing on the experiences of the Japanese soldiers who gave their lives defending the relatively small island in the Pacific.

The Battle of Iwo Jima extended over an extraordinarily bloody 35-day period that stretched between February 19 and March 26, 1945. During this battle, over 6,000 American troops died, while U.S. casualties numbered over 23,000. On the Japanese side, nearly 22,000 soldiers died defending the strategic island. Located some 650 miles south-southeast of Tokyo, the island lay almost exactly halfway between the airfields that the U.S. military had established on Guam, Saipan, and the Mariana Islands and the Japanese mainland. Although the United States had already been engaged in B-52 bombing missions focused on the Japanese mainland, the 1,200-mile distance from their island airfields to Japan stretched the capabilities of their bombers. Taking Iwo Jima, reasoned U.S. military commanders, would allow for much more effective B-52 strikes; it would also limit kamikaze attacks on American battleships that were being carried out by pilots who lifted off from Iwo Jima.

American forces were not expecting to meet the sort of resistance they encountered when they stormed the beaches of Iwo Jima in 1945. Knowing full well that Japanese soldiers would fight tenaciously to hold territory they had been ordered to defend, and further, that the Japanese understood Iwo Jima as part of the motherland, U.S. forces were still unprepared for the defensive strategy that was put in place by the Japanese commander on the island, Lieutenant General Tadamichi Kuribayashi.

Kuribayashi, who seemed to understand that he and his men had little chance of actually defeating the U.S. invading force, decided that attempting to stop American troops on the beach would be foolhardy. With this in mind, he had his soldiers pull back off the beaches and build a series of heavily fortified bunkers connected by an intricately designed string of tunnels.

Basing his film on information provided in letters that were written by Kuribayashi and other men to their families while they nervously awaited the arrival of the Americans, Eastwood portrayed the Japanese troops in a radically different way than they had so often been depicted in traditional World War II combat pictures. Instead of representing them as some nameless, faceless, evil force of nature, in *Letters from Iwo Jima*, they are shown to be simple human beings who desperately miss their families and who, like most young men in battle, cannot really understand why we must fight and die.

With the arrival of Kuribayashi, things begin to change quickly on Iwo Jima. The newly assigned commander (played in a powerfully subtle way by the Japanese actor Ken Watanabe) immediately sets off on foot to survey the island. When he returns—exhausted yet energized—he directs his officers to begin to implement what they feel is his controversial defense plan. He also gives orders that the foot soldiers tasked with digging the bunkers and tunnels that will be used to defend Iwo Jima should be treated with dignity, receiving adequate breaks for water and rations of food equal to those provided to their superiors.

Eastwood does a masterful job depicting the existential despair experienced by most of the Japanese soldiers on the island who struggle with the demand that they remain committed to a nineteenth-century Bushido ethic (the “Way of the Warrior”) that requires them to face death fearlessly. Most of the young men, while proud of serving the motherland, want nothing more than to survive and return to their families. In one particularly chilling scene, a group of soldiers, who realize that they will almost certainly be captured, are forcefully directed by their commanding officer to commit ritual suicide—much like the samurai warriors of old. Declaring their loyalty to Japan, each pulls the pin on a hand grenade and shoves it up against his stomach. One of the soldiers, Saigo (Kazunari Ninomiya), who has consistently grappled with his commitment to the cause, risks dishonor by fleeing—he hopes that he might blend in with other troops and somehow make his way off the island and back to his wife and newborn daughter. Even the courageous Kuribayashi struggles with his mortality—after being wounded, he realizes that he must commit suicide, denying himself the opportunity to say a proper goodbye to his family.

Taken together, Eastwood’s *Letters from Iwo Jima* and *Flags of Our Fathers* remind us that war, while sometimes perversely heroic, is always tragic—people die, lives are shattered, and we are all left broken and unsure of what exactly has been accomplished.

See also: Eastwood, Clint; *Flags of Our Fathers*; War Film, The

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—*Claire Puccia Parham*

LION KING, THE. Walt Disney loved nature, and *The Lion King* (1994) was one of the many products of the Disney Company's longstanding affinity for animals. The film, winner of the 1995 Golden Globe for Best Motion Picture Comedy/Musical, became a Disney classic, beloved by fans around the world.

The story, adapted from *Hamlet*, follows a young lion cub named Simba (voiced by Jonathan Taylor Thomas and Matthew Broderick). Simba's father, King Mufasa (voiced by James Earl Jones), is a strong leader who teaches Simba about the difficulties of being King and the importance of respecting all living things. Mufasa's brother Scar (voiced by Jeremy Irons), resents Mufasa and Simba, leading him to befriend the hyenas, who live outside the boundaries of the Pride Lands and are the only creatures over which Mufasa does not rule. With the hyenas' help, Scar plots to kill both Mufasa and Simba in order to ascend to the throne. While the plan is successful in regard to killing Mufasa, Simba escapes, taking refuge in a distant oasis.

Timon (voiced by Nathan Lane) and Pumbaa (voiced by Ernie Sabella) find Simba and teach him to adopt a life of leisure. As he tries to overcome the guilt of his father's death, Simba grows with Timon and Pumbaa, content to live outside his Kingdom. When his childhood friend Nala (voiced by Niketa Calame/Moira Kelly) finds him and pleads for him to return, however, Simba reconsiders. Conflicted, Simba encounters the sorcerer baboon Rafiki (voiced by Robert Guillaume), who shows him that nothing can be done about the past. Suddenly, Mufasa's ghost appears in the clouds, telling Simba to "take your place in the Circle of Life" and to "remember who you are." Simba returns to the Kingdom and defeats Scar in a dramatic and visually stunning fight scene. Following Simba's reclamation of the throne, it rains, symbolically washing away the evil of Scar and signaling a rebirth for the land.

In addition to the film, a successful Broadway version of *The Lion King*, produced by director Julie Taymor, opened in 1997. The soundtrack, composed by Elton John and Tim Rice, produced three Academy Award nominations for Best Song: "Circle of Life," "Hakuna Matata," and "Can You Feel the Love Tonight," with the last taking home the Oscar. Disney even produced two sequels, *Lion King II* (1998) and *Lion King 1 1/2* (2004), although neither achieved the critical or box-office success of the original.

It may be argued that the film's success is due in large part to its familiarity. Apart from the parallels to *Hamlet*, the characters recall those in traditional Westerns. From the lawless bandits (hyenas), to the redemptive violence (Simba fighting Scar), and the reliance on one man to solve the community's problems (Nala tells Simba that he is the only one who can save the Pride Lands), *The Lion King* follows the long-established formula of the genre Western. Another reason for the film's success may be attributed to the way the character of Simba is depicted. Simba confronts personal



Scene from the 1994 film *The Lion King*, directed by Roger Allers and Rob Minkoff. Pictured are Baby Simba (voiced by Jonathan Taylor Thomas), Rafiki the Mandrill (voiced by Robert Guillaume), Queen Sarabi (voiced by Madge Sinclair), King Mufasa (voiced by James Earl Jones), and (below) Scar (voiced by Jeremy Irons). (Photofest)

tragedy, a widespread emotional difficulty that everyone faces. In addition, Simba's feelings of inadequacy when compared to his father—beautifully demonstrated when he steps in his father's huge paw print—speaks volumes about the complexity of father-son relationships.

Critics of the film argued that the picture perpetuated destructive stereotypes—in this case racial, as the good characters are light-skinned, the evil characters dark-skinned—and that it was another attempt by Disney to indoctrinate children. (In 1995, the studio would once again come under attack—this time for perpetuating gender stereotypes—for its *Cosmo*-cover depiction of Pocahontas.) Some even suggested that woven into the storyline of *The Lion King* were ideas advocating the creation of a monarchy in South Africa following the end of apartheid. Although the latter suggestion appears far-fetched, it shows that issues concerning Disney and stereotyping will continue to be discussed.

See also: Animation

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—Sean Graham

LITTLE BIG MAN. The year 1969 marked the point at which a momentous decade in American history drew to a close. The decade was marked by antiwar protests against the ongoing conflict in Vietnam and by revolutionary social movements related to issues of class, gender, race, and sexual orientation. Nowhere were these changes more accurately recorded than on the big screen.

Arthur Penn's *Little Big Man* (1970) encapsulated many of society's changes and revolutionized the western. Decades earlier, director John Ford set the standard for the genre with his Cavalry trilogy: *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* (1948), *Fort Apache* (1949), and *Rio Grande* (1950). One biographer noted that Ford placed Native Americans and African Americans on the lowest rung of the social ladder, rarely giving them speaking parts or sympathetic treatment (Baxter, 1971). John Wayne faithfully played the heroic Cavalry officer pitted against Indian antagonists. Penn took another tack and gave *Little Big Man*'s Native American characters a humanity rarely seen before in film.

Little Big Man begins with 121-year-old Jack Crabbe, played by Dustin Hoffman, recounting his life and adventures in the Wild West. It is unclear whether Crabbe actually witnessed life on the plains or just possessed a colorful imagination. Found at age 10 after a wagon train massacre, Crabbe was adopted by a band of Cheyenne who call themselves the Human Beings. Crabbe learns to track and hunt, earning the name Little Big Man when he demonstrates how courageous he is in the face of a Pawnee attack despite his less than imposing stature. He lives an unfettered life as a Cheyenne warrior, nurtured by his adoptive family until being captured during a skirmish with the army. In trademark Penn style, the film turns to parodying the dominant society's values as Crabbe receives religious instruction from a switch-wielding preacher and his seductive wife, joins a maimed swindler to peddle snake oil, and drinks soda pop alongside Wild Bill Hickok.

Little Big Man's Cheyenne family is cast in a more complicated but tender light. While he was raised by his wise and virile grandfather, Old Lodge Skins, Penn depicts more complex and often overlooked roles in Cheyenne society. Younger Bear, a long-time rival who owes Little Big Man his life, becomes a *contraire*, saying the opposite of what he means and doing things backwards. Little Horse, a childhood friend who preferred to stay behind with the women while the men went to war, is identified as a Heemaneh, an individual who assumes another gender. When they reunite later in the film, Little Horse offers to become Little Big Man's wife, a union that was not only acceptable but desirable in Native communities (Williams, 1986). Little Big Man instead takes in and services his own wife's three unmarried sisters, winning praise as a loyal and generous husband. Despite clear documentation from the nineteenth century, such social dynamics are rarely depicted in film.

The treatment of the U.S. Cavalry and General Custer in particular is revolutionary for the time and mimics the growing dissent over the war in Vietnam. Unlike John Wayne's dashing officers who always best the Indians, Richard Mulligan's General Custer comes across as an arrogant buffoon whose obsession with the public's perception of him compromises his military campaign. With decades of scholarship to draw on, Penn's depiction of the doomed officer was more caricature than accurate



Native American warriors on horseback in a scene from *Little Big Man*, directed by Arthur Penn. (Ernst Haas/Getty Images)

representation. While Custer may have been arrogant, circumstances overwhelmingly favored the Indians, who possessed superior numbers and weapons (Michno, 1997). Custer's troops, on the other hand, were poorly positioned, easily divided, and not accustomed to taking the offensive in the face of unified Indian resistance.

With *Little Big Man*, Arthur Penn not only spun an entertaining tale of historic events and colorful figures of the Old West, he revised generations of bias and stereotypes. Penn portrayed the Cheyenne as human beings in their own words, victims of an encroaching expansion threatening their way of life. By giving Native Americans voices and emotions against the backdrop of Plains Indian wars, he presented audiences with a revisionist history lesson. *Little Big Man* takes Native Americans from faceless riders on the horizon to loving, inclusive people trying to make sense of a changing world.

See also: Penn, Arthur; Western, The

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—Mark Vezzola

LORD OF THE RINGS, THE. Adapted from J. R. R. Tolkien's classic novels, *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy is perhaps the largest film production in history. Spanning nearly a decade in planning and production and boasting an estimated budget of \$297 million, *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy was an ambitious project that set out to bring the complex civilizations, languages, and creatures of Middle Earth to life. Writers Fran Walsh, Philippa Boyens, and Peter Jackson shared the task of first adapting Tolkien's mythical world from book to screen. Their visual translation created a model for global event filmmaking, and had a major impact on American fan culture.

Originally written in the mid-1900s, *The Lord of the Rings* novels have grown in popularity among literary critics and science fiction and fantasy readers alike. The series follows the gentle hobbit Frodo Baggins on a grueling but inspiring journey to protect and then destroy an all-powerful ring that threatens all life in Middle Earth. Each film in the series was released in the month of December, beginning with *The Fellowship of the Ring* in 2001, *The Two Towers* in 2002, and finally *The Return of the King* in 2003. Jackson in particular, who also directed, claimed to be committed to creating an historical film rather than a fantasy film, so design elements became the key to capturing the cultures of Middle Earth. The film series draws upon a range of special effects and design techniques to bring Tolkien's elaborate, magical world to life. Due to the unique demands for costumes, modeling, computer-generated images (CGI), and other digital effects, the production inspired ideas that have since become



Scene from the 2001 film *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*, starring Elijah Wood. Directed by Peter Jackson. (Photofest)

customary in large-scale special effect filmmaking. To achieve the realism the filmmakers sought, scores of polystyrene sculptures and miniatures—or “bigatures” as the larger models have come to be known—were created for Middle Earth. Through manipulation of light and scale, these models were used to create anything from a sky-scraping tower to a deep, echoing cavern. Despite the creation of these magical models, Middle Earth could only be fully realized through the use of blue-screen technology and CGI. Along with the *Star Wars* prequels (1999, 2002, 2005) and the *Harry Potter* series (2001, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2010), *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy combines innovative digital effects with traditional physical effects. These film series—all produced within the past decade—have come to symbolize a new age in epic film production.

The Lord of the Rings trilogy compares to the *Harry Potter* series and *Star Wars* not only because of the production traits, but also because of the fan culture these films have attracted. *The Lord of the Rings* is supported by one of the largest and most vigorous fan cultures of all time. The adaptation from the original novels to the film series has sparked exponential growth in fan activism, and the story’s rebirth in the digital age adds to its significance as a staple of American culture. An exceptionally loyal fan base surrounding the original novels has existed for years, so the introduction of a new generation of film enthusiasts has caused a culture clash within the *Lord of the Rings* extended fan family. Among the more controversial points of contention within the self-termed “ringer” community are the competing languages between the books and films. Though members of the film production, and Jackson in particular, worked tirelessly to remain as loyal as possible to Tolkien’s original writings, some changes have provoked criticism from devoted fans of the novels. One notable adaptation that took place for the film series was the omission or revision of English words like “gay” and “queer,” which were used commonly in Tolkien’s novels. Contemporary meanings of these words have helped strengthen alternative interpretations of homosexuality both in the original story and the film adaptation. Coupled with a particularly affectionate relationship between Frodo and his best friend Sam, these alternative readings have gained a great deal of momentum among fans. Because of this, relationships in *The Lord of the Rings* have been re-shaped and cultivated by fans on the Internet, in particular. Perhaps one reason for such an active fan culture surrounding *The Lord of the Rings* is the emergence of online communities and blogs. A number of Web sites provide forums for discussion between ringers. In addition to a flourishing fan culture within discussion-based Web sites, fans produce their own revisions to the existing stories. Alternate scenes and storylines continue to come to light, from satirical drawings, poems, and articles to erotic slash fiction that romanticizes the relationships within the fellowship—the group of hobbits, men, dwarves and elves accompanying Frodo on his journey.

Despite the different readings fans have derived from the films, or perhaps because of them, each film in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy was immensely successful at the box office. Each one sits among the 15 top-grossing movies of all time. The final entry, *The Return of the King* (2003), is the second-highest-grossing film at \$1.1 billion worldwide. The final film also won the most awards within the trilogy, including 11

Academy Awards. All three films won Academy Awards for Best Visual Effects. Combined, the trilogy won 247 awards worldwide.

See also: Action-Adventure Film, The; New Technologies in Filmmaking

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—Adam Dean

LOST IN TRANSLATION. In the opening scene of Sofia Coppola's second feature, *Lost In Translation* (2003), the camera is fixed on the bottom of a young woman named Charlotte (Scarlett Johansson) lying on her hotel-room bed, her skin barely covered by translucent pink underpants. It's a memorable and much-discussed shot, both for its ambiguous meaning and for its gauzy and dreamy aesthetic, and it



Scene from the 2003 film *Lost in Translation*, starring Scarlett Johansson and Bill Murray. Directed by Sofia Coppola. (Photofest)

establishes the visual and emotional mood of the film (intimately shot by cinematographer Lance Acord). This scene is juxtaposed with one of Bob Harris (Bill Murray) arriving in Tokyo, sleeping in the back of a taxi, rubbing his eyes in wonderment and disbelief when he encounters the lights and kinetic energy of Tokyo and then, suddenly, a giant billboard of himself in a whiskey ad framed by Japanese characters.

Bob and Charlotte haven't met yet, the sequence suggests, but they will. As different from each other as Bob and Charlotte seem (there is a significant age gap between them), they are at similar places in their emotional lives. Charlotte is married to John (Giovanni Ribisi), a hipster photographer who has brought Charlotte to Tokyo so that he can shoot a band, leaving her alone to gaze out at the city from her hotel room (mirroring Bob's opening scene), as if searching for her place in it. Early on, Charlotte calls a friend to tell her that, after visiting a Buddhist temple, she "didn't feel anything." Bob, in turn, is at a point in his career where his film work has waned, and he's in Tokyo to shoot a Suntory whiskey commercial, a not-so-secret celebrity shame for which he will be paid \$2 million. Bob's wife Lydia is back home in Los Angeles looking after their children, and the two of them communicate through stilted phone conversations and inconveniently received faxes (Lydia seems unaware of the time difference between L.A. and Tokyo), in which she poses inane questions to Bob about how to decorate his home office.

Coppola develops the relationship between these two Americans in exile very delicately, allowing the narrative (and their parallel lives) to unfold naturally. Bob and Charlotte, both unable to sleep, wander about the hermetic and luxurious Park Hyatt Tokyo, exchange awkward smiles and knowing glances, yet it's a full half-hour before they finally speak. When they do, it is a brief and quippy late-night exchange in the hotel bar, which is usually full of lonely businessmen and suffused with the soporific music of a third-rate American lounge act. The energy of the film, along with Bob and Charlotte's friendship, shifts considerably after Charlotte invites Bob for a night out with her and Charlie (Fumihiro Hayashi) and some other Japanese friends. They go to a club, drink, chat amicably, flee an irate bartender, and run through Tokyo's streets, wending their way through crowds, traffic, and a pachinko parlor. Later, they listen to music at Charlie's apartment, and end the evening in a private karaoke room, where Charlotte endearingly falters: "I'm special" (the Pretenders' "Brass in Pocket"), while Bob nods his head in heartfelt agreement. "There is nothing more than this," he sings to her (Roxy Music's "More Than This"), and Murray's heretofore muted performance explodes with emotion. Back at the hotel, as Bob innocently tucks Charlotte into bed, his expression as he walks away from her is full of longing and resignation. Later still, in another pivotal scene, they lie on Bob's bed, fully clothed, discussing life and marriage. "I'm stuck," Charlotte says. "Does it get easier?" "No," Bob says emphatically. "Yes." He pauses. "It gets easier." But the look on Bob's face makes it clear that he's protecting Charlotte from the harsh truth. The scene, in keeping with Coppola's restrained script and style, ends with Bob gently placing his hand on Charlotte's foot and nothing more, emphasizing the importance of what is not said and the unfulfilled desire between them. Instead, Bob has a one-night stand with the hotel's lounge singer (Catherine Lambert), an obvious response to his sublimated longing for Charlotte.

Expressing her anger with him over lunch the following day, Bob responds harshly: “Wasn’t there anyone else there to lavish you with attention?” They reconcile, knowing that, within days, Bob will head back to L.A., and Charlotte’s husband will rejoin her in Tokyo.

Some critics attacked Coppola for the wispy-ness of her script (for which she won an Oscar for Best Original Screenplay), claiming she failed to push her characters into any real emotional danger. Yet others commended her for not following a traditional romantic arc, and for choosing to focus on the realistic rather than the epic. The script’s sparseness may have also allowed her leads the improvisational room to realize fully the nuances of their characters. Johansson was 18 years old when she filmed *Lost In Translation*, but she perfectly captures a 25-year-old woman who is both self-assured and lost. Murray, in arguably the best performance of his career (he was nominated for an Oscar for Best Actor), employs his trademark humor to hide the melancholy and regret that lies within.

Coppola also received criticism for failing to depict any fully developed Japanese characters and a backlash followed (citing the film’s racism), tempering the overall critical success of the film. But the story is told from Bob’s and Charlotte’s points of view, and Japan is rendered through their deeply impressionistic perspectives. Bob seems disinterested or, at best, bemused by Japan (as he is by life in general), while Charlotte is a cautious observer, full of curiosity and quiet intelligence as she deciphers Tokyo’s subway system, explores the city, and watches its people.

The film ends as it opens, with another much-remarked scene that captures one of the most affecting goodbyes in movie history. As Bob sits in the taxi that will take him to the airport, he spots Charlotte in the crowd and runs after her. “Hey you,” he says. She smiles at him. They embrace and Bob strokes Charlotte’s hair. As the camera, in close-up, focuses on Charlotte’s face, Bob whispers something in her ear. We hear words being exchanged, but they are lost on us. “Okay?” we hear Bob ask. “Okay,” Charlotte responds. They kiss for the first time and then, cautiously, turn away from each other. Charlotte walks off into the crowd, and Bob walks back to the taxi that will take him away from Tokyo and Charlotte, but hopefully not forever.

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—Helen Georgas

LOVE STORY. “What can you say about a 25-year-old girl who died? That she was beautiful. And brilliant. That she loved Mozart and Bach. The Beatles. And me.” These are the first lines of Erich Segal’s *Love Story*. Segal was a professor of literature

during the 1960s who had written the screenplay for the 1968 Beatles' film *Yellow Submarine*. Interestingly, after selling his screenplay for *Love Story*, Segal adapted his work into a novel, which became the top-selling fiction book of 1970. The film that was based on his screenplay was also released in 1970, and became the year's top box-office hit, while making millions of viewers cry.

In flashbacks, Oliver Barrett IV (Ryan O'Neal), a Harvard freshman and son of a wealthy, well-respected WASP family, details his romantic relationship with a working-class Italian American woman named Jennifer (Jenny) Cavalleri (Ali McGraw). Jenny is a talented Radcliffe scholarship student who loves classical music. Oliver's father interprets his son's relationship with Jenny as simply an act of rebellion and threatens to cut him off from the family fortune if he marries her before finishing school. Ignoring his father's threats, Oliver marries Jenny and pays for his education by working at summer camps; for her part, Jenny gives up a prestigious scholarship in Paris, and takes a teaching job at a private school that offers her a modest income. After graduation, Oliver joins a New York law firm, and they build a comfortable middle-class life. Proud that they have made their own way in the world, everything is wonderful until Jenny is diagnosed with leukemia. Unable to afford the treatments Jenny requires, Oliver turns to his father. Oliver is able to convince his father to grant him a loan only by lying to him, telling him that he has gotten another woman pregnant and needs the money in order to take care of the situation. Although Jenny receives therapy for her illness, it becomes clear that she is going to die. Oliver is distraught, yet Jenny is able to reassure him that she has lived a full life. When Oliver's father discovers what has really happened, he apologizes to Oliver, prompting Oliver to quote Jenny: "Love means never having to say you're sorry."

Love Story explored powerfully complex and often divisive issues that emerged during the 1960s: youth culture, counterculture rebellion, alienation, student uprisings, free love, and the generation gap. War-weary after the nation's long, bloody years in Vietnam, and becoming increasingly skeptical about the country's political leaders, audiences embraced the overly sentimental *Love Story*, making it an instant sensation. Although reflecting conventional attitudes toward romance and marriage, the film's dominant theme, it seems, is youthful rebellion. In contrast to Jenny, who calls her widowed father by his first name and declares her love for him, Oliver addresses his father as "Sir" and is burdened with the weight of his family heritage and the expectations attached to it. Following the path of the traditional Barrett man, Oliver attends Harvard and is preparing himself for the stultifying life embodied by his father. But then he meets Jenny and everything changes, as she teaches him that no matter what the circumstances, love conquers all.

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—*Daniela Ribitsch*

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MAGNIFICENT AMBERSONS, THE. *The Magnificent Ambersons*, the second major project at RKO Studios directed by the young Orson Welles, was an ambitious historical film faithfully conveying the anti-industrial outlook of Booth Tarkington, the author of the 1918 novel. It remains a cautionary tale about the independent filmmaker working within the studio system.

Interestingly, Welles was born near Chicago in 1915, close to the time of the publication of Tarkington's Pulitzer Prize novel. A lifelong liberal who befriended President Franklin Roosevelt, Welles, it seems, decried the destructive effects of late nineteenth-century industrialism and urbanization. His film version of *Ambersons* sentimentalizes the Gilded Age and the genteel Amberson family of Indianapolis. Picture postcard scenes celebrate the upper-class balls, dinners, and outings of the very rich, whose wealth was accumulated before the mass production of automobiles and other products. Taking a cue from Tarkington, Welles—in a voice-over narration—speaks broodingly about the industrial darkness spreading over the city as real estate values fall in the Ambersons' formerly idyllic neighborhood.

The Magnificent Ambersons was the second and last studio-made film by the director who would become the exemplar of independent filmmaking. It was a classic case of trying to fit a square peg into a round hole. Welles's first effort at RKO, *Citizen Kane*, had been a critical success but a box-office failure. RKO could not afford a repeat. When Welles finished with a multihour epic, filmed in bravura but unsettling style, the studio was bewildered. Cinematographer Stanley Cortez had provided the deep-focus photography, Rembrandt lighting, offbeat angles, and tracking shots that Welles required. Movie audiences in 1942 were not accustomed to Welles's visual and audio tricks—radio and live stage devices, including overlapping dialogue and widely spaced actors on deep-focus sets. For these and other reasons, Welles lost control of the editing process and suffered his film to be cut from 148 minutes to 88, a process that also involved the mutilation of Bernard Herrmann's musical score. The truncated result was released in Los Angeles on a double bill with *Mexican Spitfire Sees a Ghost*.

Another problem was the fact that the actual shooting of the film in late 1941 and its release in 1942 straddled the Pearl Harbor tragedy and the entrance of the United

States into World War II, a development that changed public taste in movies to Welles's detriment. RKO executives foolishly previewed a version of *Ambersons* on a double bill in Pomona, California, to a generally youthful audience that had enjoyed the first half of the bill, a musical comedy, *The Fleet's In*. The long, heavy film that followed had audience members hooting, walking out, and denouncing it on response cards. Studio head George Schaefer was mortified and in fear of losing his job—which he eventually did.

Timing was poor, in regard to both the story (a lament for Victorian America) and to the cinematic expressions of an essentially noncommercial filmmaker (none of Welles's subsequent movies was a hit with mass audiences). Not much more than a decade later, directors like Welles—Bergman, De Sica, Fellini—would be finding audiences in art-house and college cinemas nationwide. Welles, it seems, was ahead of his time, but not by much.

See also: Melodrama, The; Welles, Orson

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—James Delmont

MAGNIFICENT SEVEN, THE. *The Magnificent Seven* (1960) is a Western produced and directed by John Sturges that was based on the 1954 film *Shichinin no Samurai* (*Seven Samurai*), directed by Akira Kurosawa. Long interested in American films, Kurosawa said that he was trying to create a Japanese Western with *Seven Samurai*. Thus, a Hollywood remake was probably inevitable. *The Magnificent Seven* was produced on a budget of \$2 million (the English rights to *Seven Samurai* were acquired for only \$250) and was shot in Tepoztlan, near Cuernavaca, Mexico. Government censors in Mexico disliked having Mexican bandits killed solely by Americans, so the young hero Chico (Horst Buchholz) was created to alleviate their concerns.

The plot is uncomplicated. Following another attack on their village by thieves led by Calvera (Eli Wallach), several Mexican farmers travel to a U.S. border town to purchase guns. Upon arriving, they witness two gunmen, Chris (Yule Brynner) and Vin (Steve McQueen), defeat a group of men who objected to an Indian being buried in the town's cemetery. Impressed, the farmers convince Chris to help them. He then recruits additional gunslingers, including Vin, who prefers being a poorly paid man of action to becoming a comfortable store clerk. The safety of the Mexican village is finally secured after several battles between the seven gunmen (aided by the villagers) and Calvera and his men, but it costs the lives of four of the heroes.



Scene from the 1960 film *The Magnificent Seven*, starring (from left) James Coburn, Brad Dexter, Robert Vaughn, Charles Bronson, Horst Buchholz, Steve McQueen, and Yul Brynner. Directed by John Sturges. (Photofest)

The film affirms the right to use violence (both individually and collectively) to defend life, property, and self-determination. (Even the wise old man of the community warns the villagers they must learn to kill or die.) It also locates the source of beneficial military intervention in the United States. The film can be read, therefore, against the backdrop of the Cold War, but more domestic concerns are also apparent. Most prominent is the closing of the West and the uncertain place that men of action and violence have in the newly settled world. This is made clear in the first scene between Chris and Vin, who refer to themselves as “drifting” in subsequent dialogue about the low pay offered for the gunmen’s services, and in the conversation among the seven late in the film about the freedom (and loneliness) of their profession. Even Calvera refers nostalgically to a past of plenty when, like a good father, he more easily fed his men.

The construction of masculinity is thus at the heart of the film and may reflect concerns about the role of men in postwar America. Chico and the trio of village boys who befriend O’Reilly (Charles Bronson) most successfully resolve the tensions in the film concerning masculinity. Although Chris initially calls him a kid and notes that graveyards are full of proud but inexperienced youth, Chico describes himself as a man. He eventually proves this through skill and reckless daring, yet he also falls in love

and becomes attached, despite his oft-repeated contempt for the farmers. Ultimately his choice of social responsibility as a future husband rather than his success as a gunslinger demonstrates his newfound manhood. Likewise the village boys learn to embrace their fathers—men burdened by responsibility—as truly courageous and brave. Contrarily, although they also become emotionally invested in the villagers' lives, Chris and Vin cannot settle down.

During the 1960s, *The Magnificent Seven* was at the forefront of the internationalization of the Western, influencing Italian spaghetti Westerns. The main theme of its Oscar-nominated score by Elmer Bernstein also graced Marlboro cigarette advertisements with their iconic images of cowboys. The film inspired three sequels and a short-lived television series of the same name (1998–1999). The themes and situations in that series—the changes in the ethnicities, backstories, and treatment of the seven principal male characters and their relocation to an American frontier town where they gradually mature from aimless drifters to reasonably committed lawmen deputized by the circuit judge—point to the transformation of the social, cultural, and political contexts in America between 1960 and 1998.

See also: Sturges, John; Western, The

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—Stanley C. Pelkey II

MALCOLM X. Spike Lee's *Malcolm X* (1992) is based loosely on *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, as told to Alex Haley. The picture played an important part in developing the African American film, the African American actor, and perhaps most importantly, Spike Lee as a director.

Following the book, *Malcolm X* is divided neatly into three sections. In the first section, we learn the story of a young Malcolm Little (Denzel Washington). His father is murdered by the Black Legion; his mother, now single and poor, breaks down emotionally and is eventually institutionalized. After leaving foster care, Malcolm finds a job on the railroad, where he is introduced to singers, gangsters, white women, and a



Scene from the 1970 film *Malcolm X*, starring Denzel Washington. Directed by Spike Lee. (Photofest)

life of crime. He ultimately leaves New York City and makes his way to Boston, where he and his best friend Shorty (Spike Lee) are both arrested for burglary and sentenced to 10 years in prison.

The prison years comprise the film's second section. While serving his time, Malcolm meets Baines (Albert Hall), a fellow inmate, who introduces him to the teachings of the Nation of Islam and, in particular, to the work of its leader, Elijah Muhammad.

The film's final section follows Malcolm Little's transition to Malcolm X. He now becomes an outspoken advocate of the ideals of the Nation of Islam and rallies the black community to free themselves from their white oppressors "by any means necessary." Representing a far different vision of black liberation than Martin Luther King, Jr., who urged his followers toward "nonviolent resistance," Malcolm X now becomes a powerful, and sometimes violent, force in the black community. All of this changes, however, when Malcolm goes on pilgrimage to Mecca. There he comes to understand that the vast majority of Muslims reject the most violent ideals of The Nation of Islam. Returning to America, Malcolm begins to speak out against The Nation and Elijah Muhammad, which leads to his being criticized, attacked, and eventually murdered.

Interestingly, Norman Jewison (*In the Heat of the Night*, *The Hurricane*) was originally slated to direct the film; and it was he who brought Washington (who had played Malcolm X on Broadway) onto the project. Lee, though, argued that it would be impossible for anyone other than a black director to tell the story of Malcolm X. The stakes were too high, according to Lee, to trust this picture to a white director. Producer Marvin Worth agreed, and chose Lee to direct the film.

Ironically, many in the black community, and especially members of the Nation of Islam, did not support Worth's choice of Lee to direct *Malcolm X*. Many worried, based on what they saw as Lee's tendency to deal with black/white racial issues in an almost satirical fashion in his previous work (*Mo' Better Blues*, *Do the Right Thing*, *School Daze*), that he might taint the legacy of Malcolm X. Lee, they feared, would focus this autobiographical narrative on the early, criminal years of Malcolm Little and neglect the work that Malcolm X did as a Nation of Islam community leader. For his part, Lee did not endear himself to members of the entertainment community when he requested that he only be interviewed by African American reporters while he was involved with the project. Even the casting of Denzel Washington was called into question, as some believed that the light-skinned six-foot actor would be unable to portray the six-foot-four inch, darker-skinned Malcolm X. Once the film was released, however, these concerns disappeared. Lee did a masterful job of bringing the *Autobiography of Malcolm X* to the screen, establishing himself as a major Hollywood player in the process; while Washington succeeded in bringing Malcolm X to life with a brilliant, Oscar-nominated portrayal of the slain civil rights leader.

See also: African Americans in Film; Lee, Spike; Washington, Denzel

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—Robert C. Robinson

MALTESE FALCON, THE. Considered one of the greatest Hollywood detective films, *The Maltese Falcon* (1941) helped cement Humphrey Bogart's status as one of cinema's superstars, launched John Huston's career as a director, and turned the character of the hard-boiled detective into an elemental figure in American movies. Although debated by some, most consider the picture the first true film noir offering, one that profoundly influenced the noir movement that emerged during the 1940s. Adapted for the screen by Huston, and made for the modest sum of \$300,000, the 1941 version of *The Maltese Falcon* was the third film based on Dashiell Hammett's classic novel; Huston's masterpiece, though, towers above the others.

The film follows private eye Sam Spade (Bogart) as he becomes embroiled in the search for a highly desired black Falcon, a jewel-encrusted statuette being sought by a veritable rogue's gallery of villains. The beautiful Brigid O'Shaughnessy (Mary Astor) contacts Spade and his partner, Miles Archer (Jerome Cowan), claiming that her sister has run off with a criminal; appearing distraught, Brigid hires the detectives to rescue her sister. That night, Archer is murdered and Spade, even though he is the victim's partner, becomes the primary suspect in the crime. Digging into the case in order to



From left to right, actors Humphrey Bogart, Peter Lorre, Mary Astor, and Sydney Greenstreet in a still from the film *The Maltese Falcon*, directed by John Huston and based on the book by Dashiell Hammett, 1941. (Warner Bros./Archive Photos/Getty Images)

clear his name, and to avenge the death of his partner, Spade comes to realize that his mysterious client has a propensity for lying and manipulation; Brigid, it seems, has no sister, and in reality, it is she who has fallen in with dangerous men.

In short order, Spade meets these men: Joel Cairo (Peter Lorre), an effeminate sprite of a man of indeterminate foreign origin; Kasper Gutman (Sydney Greenstreet), who is obese, jovial, and malevolent; and Wilmer (Elisha Cook Jr.), Gutman's tough-talking gunman. Along with Brigid, they have searched the globe for the falcon, a quest that appears to have reached its conclusion in San Francisco. Playing the various villains off against each other, Spade delves ever deeper into the maze of deception, intrigue, and murder swirling around the priceless bird. Despite temptations, both romantic and financial, he cannot be bribed, and at the end of the film, he turns the whole lot over to the police, Brigid and the falcon included.

The Maltese Falcon is the rare picture in which virtually all the filmic elements seem tailor-made, as if Hammett penned the novel with the movie in mind. Huston, with his unsentimental approach, was an ideal choice to direct the author's brawny prose, while the principal actors were perfectly cast. Surprisingly, Bogart only landed the lead role after George Raft turned it down, but he did the most with his opportunity. Indeed Spade became, by way of Bogart's genius, the first of the actor's characterizations of the dangerously attractive, world-weary loner—one who is honor-bound to

follow a strict moral code that only he seems to understand. Bogart would bring this iconic character to life again and again, especially in films such as *Casablanca* (1942) and *The Big Sleep* (1946). For their parts, Greenstreet, making his film debut at the age of 62, after nearly four decades on the stage, turned Gutman into one of cinema's great villains, while Lorre was equally effective as the effete Cairo.

Film historians disagree on whether or not *The Maltese Falcon* constitutes an "official" film noir, as the trends that led to that movement, including social dislocation, the fear of atomic warfare, and the psychic ravages of World War II, had yet to appear in 1941. However, it clearly introduces many of the elements essential to noir, including the beautiful-but-deadly femme fatale, the hard-boiled protagonist, and degenerate characters with twisted morals. Moreover, the character of Spade introduces noir's peculiar blend of cynicism and integrity. The detective admits he does not particularly care for Archer, and even has Archer's name removed from their office door the day after the murder; but driven by his sense of honor, he stops at nothing to avenge his partner's death. Despite appearances to the contrary, Spade's integrity is unimpeachable; and when Brigid pleads for her freedom, he responds by telling her, "Don't be too sure I'm as crooked as I'm supposed to be."

See also: Bogart, Humphrey; Film Noir; Hard-Boiled Detective Film, The; Huston, John

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—Bryan Kvet

MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE, THE. John Frankenheimer's *The Manchurian Candidate* opened in New York City on October 24, 1962, at the height of the Cold War and during the week that the Cuban Missile Crisis exploded, stunning frightened Americans. In the film, Frankenheimer focused on themes such as the threat of communist subversion, America's paranoid response to the threat, and the loss of individual liberties.

Screenwriter George Axelrod (*Breakfast at Tiffany's*, *The Seven Year Itch*) developed the screenplay from Richard Condon's 1957 novel. The film begins in 1952, during the Korean War. An American platoon, led by the abrasive and unpopular Sergeant Raymond Shaw, is ambushed by enemy forces during a patrol mission. The film fast forwards; the platoon is back in the United States, and Raymond Shaw is hailed as the hero who saved them. When asked about Shaw, the platoon members, including its second in command Bennett Marco (Frank Sinatra), all respond in the same monotone way: "Raymond Shaw is the kindest, bravest, warmest, most wonderful human being I have ever known in my life." This mantra is recited, even as Marco and his

fellow soldiers begin to have nightmares about Shaw killing two members of the platoon.

Shaw's popularity is exploited by his mother, Mrs. Iselin (Angela Lansbury), and her husband, Raymond's stepfather, Senator John Iselin (James Gregory). Often compared to the perverse mother/son relationship portrayed in Hitchcock's *Psycho*, the relationship between Raymond and his mother is characterized by her total control over him. In fact, Mrs. Iselin demands unquestioned obedience from all the men in her life: they are simply pawns in a game of political chess.

It was obvious to 1960's audiences that the character of Senator Iselin was patterned after Wisconsin Senator Joe McCarthy. Frankenheimer makes his contempt for McCarthy clear in shaping the Iselin character. In the manner of McCarthy, the fictitious senator is depicted as a paranoid hunter of communists. In one memorable scene, for example, Iselin announces to reporters that he knows of 207 members of the Communist Party working in the Defense Department. This scene bears a striking resemblance to the actual moment in 1950 when McCarthy delivered his famous Wheeling, West Virginia, speech, in which he claimed to have knowledge of 205 communists in the State Department. Of course, neither McCarthy nor Iselin was able to keep his numbers straight, and each ends up continually changing the count. In the film, Iselin eventually settles on a number he can easily remember: 57, which he happened to see on the label of a catsup bottle.

As the story unfolds, Marco's investigation into the strange dreams of the platoon members uncovers a diabolical scheme carried out by Chinese (hence the *Manchurian Candidate*) and Russian scientists who had captured and brainwashed Shaw, Marco, and their men. Interestingly, while attacking McCarthy's irrational fears concerning the presence of hundreds of communist subversives in America, the film seemed to be saying that some of those fears were actually warranted. Common stereotypes, such as the Fu Manchu-like communist Dr. Yen Lo (Khig Dhiagh), were used to reinforce those fears. Indeed, Shaw's mother, who tries to use her son to assassinate her party's presidential candidate in order to clear the way to the Oval Office for her husband, turns out to be exactly the kind of communist subversive that McCarthy claimed threatened the American people. The film climaxes with Marco attempting to destroy the communist "programming" that is allowing Shaw to be manipulated. Believing he has failed, Marco rushes to stop Shaw from carrying out the assassination. In the end, however, Raymond regains his individuality. Rather than carry out the assassination, he instead kills Iselin, his mother, and then commits suicide.

Following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963, Frankenheimer slowed his film's distribution and later refused to allow a second theatrical release altogether. Although both Frankenheimer and Sinatra denied it, there were rumors that Lee Harvey Oswald had been driven to kill Kennedy because he had viewed *The Manchurian Candidate*. Running periodically on television through the 1970s, the film was rediscovered in 1988, and with the support of Sinatra, rereleased. In 2004, it was remade and updated, featuring contemporary stars Denzel Washington and Meryl Streep.

See also: Frankenheimer, John; Sinatra, Frank; Politics and Film; War Film, The



Frank Sinatra, actor-singer, helps Laurence Harvey, British actor, from the lake at Central Park in New York, 1962, during the filming of *The Manchurian Candidate*, directed by John Frankenheimer. In the scene from the film Harvey has, according to the script, reacted to a random suggestion: “Go jump in the lake.” (AP/Wide World Photos)

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—Robert W. Malick

MANHATTAN. *Manhattan* opens with a montage of images of New York City, combined with the voice of Isaac “Ike” Davis (Woody Allen) as he attempts to begin his novel: “Chapter One. He adored New York City. He idolized it all out of proportion. Uh, no, make that: He—he . . . romanticized it all out of proportion. Now . . . to him . . . no matter what the season was, this was still a town that existed in black and white and pulsated to the great tunes of George Gershwin. Ahhh, now let me start this over. Chapter One. He was too romantic about Manhattan as he was about everything else.” Isaac continues to start and stop as more images of New York City are projected upon the screen, and with this opening, Woody Allen continues the philosophical treatise on art he began to create in *Annie Hall*.

The scene at Elaine's, which follows the opening montage, establishes the key conflict in the film. The opening montage, with Ike's voice-over, emphasizes the creative process at work. Yet the first voice we hear in Elaine's is Yale's (Michael Murphy), stating that "the essence of art is to provide a kind of working through the situation for people, you know, so that you can get in touch with feelings that you didn't know you had, really." This is the voice of the art critic, expressing a didactic approach to art. While his comment echoes Alvy Singer's statement in *Annie Hall*, that art is a way to get things perfect that can't be attained in life, Yale's perspective is that of the viewer, not the creator. Indeed, throughout the course of the film, Yale seems to personify another line from *Annie Hall*: "Those who can't do, teach, and those who can't teach, teach gym." He lacks the moral courage to write the O'Neill biography he's been planning. He recognizes the narcissistic value of art for the spectator, but seems unable to comprehend the courage necessary to succeed as an artist, which Ike displays when he quits his job to write his own long-planned novel. Yale's definition of art seems to be an extension of Ralph Waldo Emerson's, in that by throwing "a light upon the mystery of humanity," art simplifies the complex because it emphasizes the essential components of nature that man needs in order to survive in civilization. But the art critic complicates this relationship through his analysis of art. The process of criticism is such that the simple becomes complex so that the art critic can offer an interpretation to disseminate its meaning. As we see in the scene in which Ike first meets Mary (Diane Keaton), her critique of the art in the gallery reflects the pseudo-intellectual complication the art critic levies on the art: "To me, it was—it was very textural. You know what I mean? It was perfectly integrated and it had a-a-a marvelous kind of negative capability." Allen is arguing that the critic co-opts the art, while reinscribing it with a new lexicon understood only by the critic herself.

Tracy (Mariel Hemingway) is central to Isaac's search for integrity. Contrary to many critics' assessments, which seem to echo Mary's comment to Yale, "somewhere Nabokov is smiling," Ike's relationship with Tracy is not "Humbertian." Indeed, Tracy functions as a symbol of those things that Ike is pursuing: goodness, innocence, and integrity. Emerson states that beauty is the mark God sets upon virtue, and this statement seems to apply to Tracy. Not only is she physically attractive, but her beauty seems to be enhanced by her character's innocence. She is, without debate, the most virtuous character in the film, and this virtue is enhanced by the depravity of the other characters. By casting her character as physically attractive, Allen draws attention to the embodiment of virtue. In Emerson's terms, God has made virtuous things beautiful so that we will be attracted to them.

Manhattan is regarded as one of Allen's masterpieces. Filmed in black and white, with a Gershwin soundtrack, *Manhattan* continues Allen's exploration of the nature of art and the artist that began with *Annie Hall* and ends with *Stardust Memories*. *Manhattan* dispenses with the sight gags and situational comedy still present in *Annie Hall*, relying more on linguistic comedy, a shift that will mark Allen's work during the 1980s.

See also: Allen, Woody; Romantic Comedy, The

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—Dean R. Cooleage

MAN IN THE GRAY FLANNEL SUIT, THE. *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (1956), directed by Nunnally Johnson, was based on Sloan Wilson's best-selling novel by the same title. It stars Gregory Peck as Tom Rath, an ex-army officer who struggles to provide for his family in 1950s New York by taking a job at a broadcasting company on Madison Avenue. Interspersed with flashbacks of Rath's experience in combat, the movie uses his struggle to fit into an ever-changing corporate environment as a narrative opening through which to explore the anxieties experienced by many Americans during a decade transformed by a post-Depression, postwar economic boom. Rath's standard "gray flannel suit," silhouetted and multiplied in the opening credits, symbolizes the social changes of "the long 1950s," during which dreams of mass consumption disguised the dual threats of anonymity and alienation that millions of middle-class Americans confronted.

The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit describes the experiences of one man living in a nation haunted by a capitalist model described by Frederick Taylor in *Principles of Scientific Management* (1911), and put in place by Henry Ford in his early twentieth-century mass-production factories. The film examines the implications of America's transformation into a culture of abundance—what John Kenneth Galbraith called the "Affluent Society." The film suggests that the abundance of 1950s middle-class existence had left Americans filled with material possessions but psychologically alienated—from each other and from themselves. Rath's destabilizing experience during the war, coupled with his return to a needy wife who wants nothing more than to climb the social ladder, forces him to decide if he is willing to compromise his ethics in order to maintain his sense of well-being. Rath's desire to achieve economic and social success—which he will only be able to do by engaging in a Machiavellian game of deception and veiled aggression—becomes increasingly difficult to reconcile with what he believes is the right way to live his life. Struggling against what he sees as the conformist hypocrisy of his white-collar colleagues, he still seeks to satisfy his wife's demands that they move to a better neighborhood. Passing from military officer, to executive, to public relations expert, Rath is a tortured man, torn between his professional obligations and the imperative to be true to himself and honest with his wife and boss.

The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit was shot immediately after Sloan Wilson published his novel in 1955. Like the book, the film went to great lengths to expose the disturbing effects that corporate culture could have on the individual. But while Wilson's novel depicted Rath as a sort of cultural spokesperson for the members of corporate America, all of whom were subject to the dangers of conformity and alienation, in his film, Johnson focused on the fate of a single individual struggling with his own

demons. Some have argued that in shifting the thematic focus of Wilson's almost quasi-scientific story away from the stultifying effects of corporate America toward the examination of one man's existential struggle, Johnson succeeded only in romanticizing a wide-ranging social problem by turning it into a personal dilemma. Yet, driven by Bernard Herrmann's somber score and Peck's powerful performance, the film still manages to deliver a significant social critique of corporate America during the mass-consumer-based 1950s.

See also: Melodrama, The

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—Enrica Picarelli

MANUFACTURING CONSENT: NOAM CHOMSKY AND THE MEDIA.

This documentary, made by Canadian filmmakers Peter Wintonick and Mark Achbar, provides a thoroughgoing and entertaining introduction to the political activism of ground-breaking linguist and radical philosopher Noam Chomsky, focusing on his trenchant critique of the role played by mainstream American corporate media in promoting the agenda of the wealthy and powerful. The film derives its title from *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, co-authored by Chomsky and Edward S. Herman in 1988, which argues that, as corporate entities themselves, the major media conglomerates are inherently sympathetic to the interests of big business, and as a result function largely to convince the American public of the wisdom of government policies that further those interests. The film, which was produced without Chomsky's active involvement but with his approval, features original footage of lectures presented in Canada, Europe, Japan, and the United States; archival clips of televised interviews and debates; and eye-catching graphics and animation. It follows Chomsky's activism over a period of several decades, presenting an engaging portrait of the man once described by the *New York Times Book Review* as "arguably the most important intellectual alive."

The central argument of the film is that the elite media—including, at the time the film was made, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, CNN, and the major



Scene from the 1992 film *Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky and the Media*. Directed by Mark Achbar and Peter Wintonick. Shown is Noam Chomsky. (Photofest)

broadcast networks—operate according to a model of propaganda. They target what Chomsky calls the “political class,” the 20 percent of the population who are educated, articulate, and politically engaged, creating “necessary illusions” and “emotionally potent oversimplifications” in an effort to secure the consent of that class for government policies. According to Chomsky, propaganda serves the same purpose in democracies as violence does in dictatorships: it essentially eliminates any possibility of meaningful dissent. This process is explored through the presentation of several case studies, the major one being a consideration of how the mainstream media portrayed the U.S.-backed Philippine invasion of East Timor in 1976 and the ongoing human rights abuses perpetrated there by the Philippine government. Chomsky makes a persuasive argument that American media served their propagandistic purpose by focusing attention on similar atrocities being committed in Cambodia during the same period by the

Khmer Rouge, an enemy of the United States, thereby diverting attention away from the role the American government was playing in East Timor.

Even without the benefit of major studio distribution, *Manufacturing Consent* has enjoyed phenomenal success for a documentary. It has been shown at more than 50 international film festivals, and has won numerous awards, including the Grand Prize at the 1992 International Documentary Film Festival in Nyon, Switzerland; the Gold Hugo, Best Social/Political Documentary, at the 1992 Chicago International Film Festival; and the Grand Prize, Best Political Documentary, at the 1994 Canadian Documentary Film Festival.

In the years following the 1993 release of *Manufacturing Consent*, the issues raised by Chomsky have arguably become even more critical. The 23 corporations cited in

the documentary as controlling the traditional media have been reduced to a mere handful, and many media activists see the monopolization of media ownership as one of the most pressing problems confronting contemporary American democracy. On the other hand, the Internet has increasingly emerged as a major alternative to the corporate media, and is seen by many as a cause for hope. However, in a 2007 interview that appears on a bonus disc that updates the original film, Chomsky discounts the importance of these changes, arguing that the continuing concentration of media ownership has no effect on the propaganda model, and that the Internet tends to function more as a distraction than as a real opportunity for education and activism. This suggests that while it may be that an inherent weakness of political documentaries is the unavoidable obsolescence of the information they present, *Manufacturing Consent* continues to present an important analysis of the function of the media in democratic societies.

See also: Documentary, The; Politics and Film

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—Judith Poxon

MAN WHO SHOT LIBERTY VALANCE, THE. When Paramount Pictures released John Ford's western in 1962, some mainstream critics cited the picture as further proof of the legendary director's incontrovertible decline. Seen as a negligible attempt to cash in on John Wayne and Jimmy Stewart's stardom, *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* was called culturally irrelevant, and Ford's direction deemed indifferent and self-derivative. The film's big-name stars—20 years too old for their parts (and poorly made-up to boot)—could not hide the fact that the film looked cheap, shot as it was in black and white, largely on a soundstage comprised of fabricated sets decked out with artificial sagebrush and cactus.

As the years have passed, however, resistance to Ford's elegiac masterpiece has evaporated; the film is now generally regarded as a culminating statement of one of America's greatest popular artists, a work of enduring relevance for those who seek to understand the ambivalence that marks present-day America's relationship to its troubled mythic past.

Deceptively layered with ironic complexity, beautifully performed, and self-reflexive to a daring degree, *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* is also a culturally transitional work, bridging the period of the classic westerns of Ford's past to the revisionist westerns of the late 1960s—Sam Peckinpah's *The Wild Bunch* or Sergio Leone's *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*, for example. It presents a heartbreaking story of frontier nobility, tragic in its implications, but employs the anarchic Liberty Valance (Lee Marvin), a



John Wayne (left), James Stewart (center), and Woody Strode on the set of the movie *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* in 1962. (Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images)

character who prefigures the coming cinematic use of sadistic (and humorous) violence, to exaggerate the archetypal threats inherent in the genre. Janus-faced, Ford's film stares simultaneously at the past of the American western in the same moment that it gazes at the genre's postmodern future.

The story is told in flashback: the venerable Senator Ransom Stoddard (James Stewart) has returned with his wife Hallie (Vera Miles) to Shinbone from Washington, D.C., to attend the funeral of a friend named Tom Doniphon. Asked by a newspaperman to account for his presence, Stoddard tells the story of his arrival in the town many decades before, at a time when Shinbone was not yet a state and was plagued by the brutal outlaw Liberty Valance. A young attorney, Stoddard wants to bring order to Shinbone by teaching its townspeople the law as it is described in his law books—to the amazement of the townspeople, he refuses to wear a gun. When the stagecoach is held up by Valance and his men, Stoddard tries to stand up to the gang and is given a vicious beating for his trouble. Realizing that in the Wild West, law comes from the end of a gun, Stoddard does the heroic thing: he becomes the man who shoots Liberty Valance.

The film's title makes plain from the outset what the outcome of this ideological struggle will be. Ford, though, provides his audience with a twist, introducing into the mix the enigmatic figure of Tom Doniphon, played by an aging and quintessentially confident John Wayne. After 25 years of working together, Ford knew how to reveal every nuance of the Wayne persona, and Wayne's Doniphon is the classic American male outsider whom we admire and also somehow resent. Like Valance, he is not

afraid to use violence; unlike Valance, however, he will earn his dream through hard work, and thus his individualism is no immediate threat to the community. Doniphon, though, senses that Stoddard will be his foil simply because Stoddard's rule of law supplants the traditional Westerner's code of instinctual ethics. Ironically, it is Doniphon's instinct for natural justice—an instinct that allows him to act outside the law—that saves Stoddard, the man who steals Doniphon's girl, destroys his idealistic dream, and brings the cursed blessings of civilization to the wild West.

Filled with loving references to Ford's earlier films, *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* critiques American individualism even while it suggests, with its final shot of a locomotive crossing the now-flourishing frontier, that the country has lost something essential with its "taming." The man known for shooting Liberty Valance rides the lie to fame and fortune; the man who really shot him—Doniphon—dies an anonymous pauper. "When the legend becomes fact, print the legend," says the newspaperman after hearing Stoddard's legend-straightening tale. The meaning of the West's settling has been perverted, Ford suggests, not only by those who have misappropriated its stories, but by those who refuse to set the story straight. In a contemporary America where people seem to care little about the facts, Ford's poignantly complex film suggests, in a particularly disturbing way, that perhaps Americans never did.

See also: Ford, John; Western, The

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—Robert Cowgill

MARY POPPINS. American attitudes toward family values, social life, and female power are addressed in Walt Disney's musical fantasy *Mary Poppins* (1964), which turned out to be Disney's greatest cinematic triumph since *Snow White* (1937). The movie combines live action and animation as well as special visual effects. Although based on P. L. Travers's first *Mary Poppins* book, the Disney film presents viewers with a much friendlier protagonist whose mission is to reunite a family.

The Banks are a typical, upper-middle-class family living in London in 1910, shortly before the beginning of World War I. George Banks works in a bank, while his wife is a busy suffragist. While searching for a nanny to care for their children, Jane and Michael, the wind literally blows Mary Poppins (Julie Andrews) into their lives. Mary Poppins has her own, unique way of educating children, showing them that work can indeed be fun, that relationships with people from the lower classes can be enriching, and that supporting beggars can be very satisfying. During a trip to their father's bank, the senior director of the institution tries to convince Michael to open a bank account. Michael, however, chooses to give his money to a poor bird lady, an



Actor Dick Van Dyke and actress Julie Andrews cross a river using turtles as stepping-stones in a scene from *Mary Poppins*, directed by Robert Stevenson, 1964. (Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

act none of the bankers understands. When Michael begins to regret his decision and loudly demands that his money be returned, the other customers misunderstand the situation and cause a run on the bank. Holding Mr. Banks responsible for his son's behavior, and thus for the run on the bank, his bosses fire him. Initially disconsolate, Mr. Banks, who now has more time to spend with his family, eventually comes to understand what is really important in life. All ends well, as the family is brought closer together and Mr. Banks is promoted to the position of bank director. Having completed her mission, Mary Poppins leaves the Banks and heads off to work her magic on another lost family.

Mary Poppins became one of the greatest hits in film history, smashing box-office records in the United States and abroad. Audiences loved everything about this unforgettable movie: its music, the actors, and its clever use of animation. Indeed, "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious," the film's catchword, even entered the American lexicon.

Many critics called the picture Disney's masterpiece. For her spectacular screen debut, Julie Andrews—who accepted the role after being replaced by Audrey Hepburn for the role of Eliza Doolittle in *My Fair Lady*—earned an Academy Award for her depiction of the lovable Mary Poppins. Four other Academy Awards went to the production: Special Visual Effects, Best Film Editing, Original Music Score, and Best Song for "Chim Chim Cher-ee."

Significantly, the character of Mary Poppins functions on multiple levels. Perhaps simply a fun-loving nanny to younger viewers, for older members of the audience, she symbolizes feminine empowerment, as she effects revolutionary change within the Bank's family. She also allows audiences to understand issues such as class conflict, male domination, and the oppression of women from a different perspective.

Although set in London in 1910, the film spoke to American audiences of the 1960s, when the first baby boom generation emerged from the conservative 1950s and sought change. While admittedly sending a rather elitist message to audiences, most of whom could not have afforded a nanny, and still defining the family as “traditional,” with the husband earning the money and the wife taking care of father and children, the film still reflected the importance of movements such as that for women’s rights. Thus, with her “spoon full of sugar” that “helps the medicine go down,” Mary Poppins helped Americans reimagine what was meant by family and communal values.

See also: Disney, Walt

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—Daniela Ribitsch

M*A*S*H*. Produced and directed by Robert Altman, the counterculture film *M*A*S*H* is a dark comedy that presents an irreverent and iconoclastic look at war. Focusing on doctors of a mobile army surgical hospital, or MASH unit, during the Korean War, the movie was released during the height of the Vietnam conflict and embraced the sentiments many war-weary Americans were feeling at the time. *M*A*S*H* became one of Twentieth Century-Fox’s most popular and critically acclaimed films of the 1970s.

*M*A*S*H* is just one piece of the creative work of Altman, who had a profound influence on film. The 1970s provided an opportunity for Altman to define his voice by producing films that were irreverent, satirical, and sometimes troubling. In addition to *M*A*S*H*, he produced a staggering 15 films in the 1970s alone, including *Brewster McCloud* (1970), *McCabe and Mrs. Miller* (1971), *The Long Goodbye* (1973), *Thieves Like Us* (1974), *Nashville* (1975), *Buffalo Bill and the Indians* (1976), *3 Women* (1977), and *Quintet* (1979).

*M*A*S*H*, rated R, stars Donald Sutherland as Capt. Benjamin Franklin “Hawkeye” Pierce, Elliott Gould as Capt. “Trapper John” McIntyre, and Tom Skerritt as Capt. Duke Forrest. The three are doctors who rebel against the status quo. In the film, Altman and screenwriter Ring Lardner Jr. poke fun at marital fidelity, religion, and race relations. The conflict in the film exists among surgeons Pierce, Forrest, and McIntyre, and the rigid military protocol propagated by Major Frank Burns (Robert Duvall) and the new head of nursing, Major Margaret “Hot Lips” Houlihan (sometimes referred to as “O’Houlihan”) (Sally Kellerman). As surgeons, they are devoted to their craft and are experts in their specialties. The operating-room scenes in the film have a compelling realism, but the harsh reality is mediated by a cavalier yet caring atmosphere punctuated by sexual entendres that provide relief from the bleakness of the task at hand. Life and death decisions are made with certainty and some



Scene from the 1970 film *M*A*S*H*, starring (in back from left) Elliott Gould and Donald Sutherland. Directed by Robert Altman. (Photofest)

detachment, as when Duke Forrest asks Father Mulcahy (Rene Auberjonois), who is administering last rites, to leave the dying soldier's side and assist him by holding a surgical instrument for another soldier. His rationale is that the effort must be placed to aid the living and not the dying.

Adding to a dimension of farce are the frequent fumbled announcements over the public address system, such as the broadcast for Yom Kippur holiday services that must be postponed to Sunday (the holiday must be observed on a particular day). These serve as a metaphor for the insanity of the environment, with its constant influx of helicopters laden with wounded soldiers requiring urgent medical assistance.

To relieve the tension, the doctors, nurses, and staff occupy themselves by making Majors Houlihan and her love interest Burns the victims of their practical jokes. In one scene, a microphone is surreptitiously placed in Houlihan's quarters to monitor her and Burns' private moments and is then fed through the public address system to broadcast to the entire camp, including the operating room, resulting in her nickname "Hot Lips." In another scene, Duke Forrest claims that Major Houlihan's blonde hair is dyed and places a \$20 bet to confirm his suspicion. To determine her true hair color, a clever scheme is devised to expose Major Houlihan as she showers, with the doctors, nurses, and staff encamping on lawn chairs, awaiting the appropriate moment when the sides of the tent are raised, exposing her to a leering and applauding crowd.

Although the surgeons may appear selfish and preoccupied with their libidos, their devotion to medicine and their patients is sustained through their actions. When Hawkeye Pierce and Trapper John McIntyre are summoned to Tokyo to operate on the wounded son of a congressman, they call themselves “the Pros from Dover” and, dressed in golfing attire, they “invade” the hospital, disregarding protocol and demanding the latest “pictures” on their patient. Appalled at their presumption, the colonel in charge threatens them with arrest, and they use their wit to blackmail him with a threatened call to the congressman, whose son’s life they have saved. When Hawkeye and Trapper are asked by a colleague to treat the sick baby of a local geisha, they immediately respond by removing the child to the military hospital and performing surgery, over the objections of the colonel and the head nurse.

Altman defied traditional film genres, deconstructing them to fulfill his vision and voice. His subject could be very personal and intimate, or it could be a study of an American institution (such as the military) and a portrait of its dysfunction. As younger directors embraced the stylistic rebellion against the hallowed traditions of filmmaking, Altman, at age 45 when he made *M*A*S*H*, had already devoted a lifetime to articulating his disdain for those values. Always seeking new ways to tell a story, he developed the technique of multilayered sound, which gave an added sense of reality to his films. He railed against the mythology of various cinematic genres. Altman explained his attitude as a kind of rebellion against clichés.

*M*A*S*H* is a testament to challenging authority and the traditions of organized institutions, including the military, government, religion, and marriage. Although its setting is Korea, the theme has an enduring relevancy to America’s leadership in the post–World War II world: war is never pretty, and its visual imagery is fraught with controversy and concern. Altman bathes his satire within the context of humor, which makes an even more profound statement on the destructiveness of these ritualistic moral constructs. It is a timeless portrait of disdain for the ineptness of leadership and the costs endured.

*M*A*S*H* was adapted from the book *MASH: A Novel about Three Army Doctors* by Richard Hooker. A popular television series, part comedy and part drama that was also named *M*A*S*H*, spun off from the film. The movie won an Oscar in 1971 for Best Writing, Screenplay Based on Material from Another Medium. In that same contest, *M*A*S*H* was nominated for Best Picture and Best Film Editing, and both Kellerman and Altman received nominations for their work.

See also: Altman, Robert; War Film, The

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—James Roman

MATRIX SERIES, THE. *The Matrix* series is a trilogy written and directed by Larry and Andy Wachowski starring Keanu Reeves, Carrie-Anne Moss, Laurence Fishburne, and Hugo Weaving. After the success of *The Matrix*, released in 1999, the next two films in the series, *The Matrix Reloaded* and *The Matrix Revolutions*, both released in 2003, continued the saga of humanity's struggle against a race of machines that keep them enslaved. Weaving together narrative elements drawn from science fiction, martial arts, and action genres, and innovative visual techniques reminiscent of traditional westerns and Japanese animation, *The Matrix* series became the filmic archetype for a late twentieth-century dystopian cultural imagination. Produced with a budget of over \$363 million, the series grossed over a billion dollars worldwide, becoming one of the most successful cinematic franchises in film history.

While the *Matrix* movies are highly regarded for their use of distinctive cinematographic elements, many of which have been copied by other filmmakers for use in their own cinematic offerings, because these films are heavily indebted to ideas taken from various liberal arts traditions, they have inspired academics to publish critical analyses in scholarly journals and anthologies and countless fans to post their ideas about the pictures on various Internet Web sites. Numerous allusions to religious ideas connected to Christianity, Buddhism, and other Eastern schools of thought, as well as to ancient and contemporary philosophy—as delightfully arcane as a reference to Jean Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation*—the prominence of characters of color—the controversial African American scholar Cornell West makes guest appearances in both *The Matrix Reloaded* and *The Matrix Revolutions*—make it clear that the Wachowski



Scene from the 1999 film *The Matrix*, starring Keanu Reeves. Directed by Andy and Larry Wachowski. (Photofest)

brothers made a conscious effort to push their films beyond the discursive boundaries of science fiction and cyber culture.

The Matrix follows the story of Thomas Anderson (Keanu Reeves), a computer programmer by day who also leads a secret second life as a “hacker,” known by his online name “Neo.” Neo is ultimately approached by the legendary hacker Morpheus (Lawrence Fishburne), a father-figure-mentor—God the Father? Old Testament prophet? Buddhist Zen master?—who reveals to the confused and frightened young man that humans actually exist within a virtual reality called the “Matrix.” Outside of this virtual domain lies a wasteland wherein humans are held in a sort of suspended animation, plugged into power outlets that generate energy for a new race of machines. A small, revolutionary band of unplugged humans live under constant threat from the machines in a city called Zion. In *The Matrix*, Morpheus educates Neo in the art of combating these machine-age enemies, who appear as *Terminator*-like agents within the otherworldly realm of virtual reality. As the story unfolds, Neo comes to understand that he may be the prophesized One, a Christlike, salvific figure who may be able to save humanity from its enslavement by the machines. He also begins to develop a romantic interest in a stunning, brutally efficient woman named Trinity (Carrie-Anne Moss)—Neo, it seems, is the third piece in a complex spiritual, trinitarian puzzle. The first film ends with Neo having survived the continuous assaults waged by the machines—who understand full well the threat that this One represents—and with his finally managing to perceive the Matrix as the binary digits of a computer program.

In *The Matrix Reloaded*, viewers become acquainted with the resistance force that exists in Zion. In the real world, enemy sentinels approach Zion intent on destroying it, while in the virtual world, Neo and his team are led to the “Architect of the Matrix” by way of different figures—who turn out to be computer programs integral to the stability of the Matrix—called the Oracle, a mysterious prophetic figure first encountered in *The Matrix* who knows that Neo is the One, Merovingian, and the Keymaker. Neo struggles against Agent Smith (Hugo Weaving), who has turned rogue after his failure to destroy Neo at the end of the first film. The Architect explains to Neo that the prophecy of the One is, in fact, a built-in control mechanism of the Matrix that serves to restore the program. Further complicating things, Neo now has to choose between saving Trinity’s life and trying to prevent the downfall of Zion, which is still under assault by the sentinels. Although Zion is ultimately destroyed (or perhaps not, as we will come to learn) by film’s end, Neo is miraculously able to save the lives of Trinity and his other friends.

The third installment of the trilogy, *The Matrix Revolutions*, begins with Neo’s struggle to escape the Matrix, where he is now trapped as a result of his efforts to save his friends and Zion at the end of the second film. With the help of Trinity and Morpheus, Neo is released from his captivity under Merovingian. Although free, he realizes that he is not fully himself, not fully his old self, whatever that may be. The Oracle explains that he now has a special connection to “the Source,” and that he will be involved in a final great conflict that can end the war between humans and the machines. She also tells Neo that the rogue Agent Smith is now his opposite, foreshadowing a conclusive battle between these two powerful opponents. Neo and a handful of humans decide to attack

the Machine City, while other humans remain in Zion defending it against the attack of the sentinels—evidently the city has survived the battle that ensued at the end of *The Matrix Reloaded*. Once past the defense system of the Machine City, Neo tries to reach an agreement with the machines with whom the humans now share a common enemy—Agent Smith. The machines agree to a cease-fire in order to destroy Agent Smith. Neo, blinded after an earlier confrontation with Agent Smith, sacrifices himself in the final battle with his enemy. The series ends with the promise of peace between the humans and the machines, after Neo saves them both.

Unlike *The Matrix*, which had an enthusiastic reception, the second and third films of the series disappointed the majority of critics and many hardcore fans. *The Matrix Reloaded* and *The Matrix Revolutions* were both criticized for being thematically and visually convoluted. The Biblical allusions, central to *The Matrix*, seemed almost an afterthought in the latter two films. The redemptive quality of *The Matrix Revolutions*—the idea that heroic self-sacrifice and the power of belief will always win out in the end—was thought by many to make the picture far too sentimental. Most critics were disappointed with the lack of originality and inventiveness of the second and third films, which they argued relied too heavily on action sequences and video-game language in order to appeal to younger audiences instead of being faithful to the more mature audiences that had been drawn to *The Matrix* because of its religio-philosophical content. Still, even though the second and third installments of the series were critical disappointments, they were nevertheless box-office successes.

Beyond being drawn in by the films' extraordinary special effects and provocative intellectual sensibilities, many fans of the *Matrix* series found it appealing because it spoke to a number of profoundly significant historical and cultural issues that defined the late twentieth and early twenty-first century during which the movies were released. The rise of new media, such as the Internet, the growth of hypersensitive surveillance technologies, and the monopolization of information by large corporations seemed to many to be signs of an impending apocalypse—much like the one depicted in *The Matrix*. It also helped, it appears, that the original film was released during the run-up to Y2K, the end-of-millennium moment when a catastrophic collapse of the world's technological systems was supposed to occur due to the failure of computer programmers to protect us from the dreaded rollover of the machines from 1999 to 2000. Although Y2K came and went without so much as a disruptive blip, the threat of what could have happened awakened people to the implications of becoming hopelessly dependent on technological systems that act—seemingly outside of our control—to shape our social and economic relationships.

See also: Science Fiction Film, The; Action-Adventure Film, The

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—Irmak Ertuna-Howison

MCCABE AND MRS. MILLER. *McCabe and Mrs. Miller* (1971) is a western drama set in the wilderness of the Pacific Northwest, early in the twentieth century. Directed by Robert Altman, and distributed by Warner Bros., the film tells the tale of the strained, yet symbiotic, relationship between a wanderer and a madam, who cling to their shared autonomy against a corporate takeover of the tiny town from which they draw their livelihoods. The film was named to the American Film Institute's Top 10 films in the western genre, alongside such iconic works as John Ford's *Stagecoach* (1939) and *The Searchers* (1956), and Clint Eastwood's *Unforgiven* (1992).

Situated in the cynical, realist tradition of the revisionist western, the film complicates, and often rejects, traditional western notions of heroism, morality, and the value of both the frontier's independence *and* its domestication. An outgrowth of the social discontent of the turbulent 1960s, revisionist westerns are self-reflexive works intended to call cherished conventions of the genre into question as a form of critique of unconsidered values and ideals. Rather than portraying a romanticized, masculine, confident West, McCabe's tiny boomtown of Presbyterian Church, awash in gritty grays and browns, is animated by icons and antiheroes, strangers and stereotypes, all struggling to negotiate their authenticity, make their mark, and find their place in the world; the town itself a namesake for faith and redemption never to be realized. The film speaks to the tensions inherent in these images and portrayals of the West, as well as offering critical commentary on attempts by traditional westerns to reconcile lives and landscapes. More than merely a setting, Altman's West is an idea—or more aptly, a constellation of ideas—a polestar for progress, yet unyielding and timeless. It lures businessmen, adventurers, and drifters alike with the myth of boundless frontier opportunities, but delivers devastation for all but the most hardened and mercenary.

In John McCabe (Warren Beatty), the film's antihero, Altman fashions a figure whose pretensions strain at the Western landscape that surrounds him. When a rain-soaked McCabe makes his way into the tiny mining town of Presbyterian Church and is mistaken for a gunslinger, he offers no objection. Taking advantage of his newfound notoriety, he makes no bones about his disdain for the grit, the harshness, and the lack of refinement. The town is at the farthest edge of habitable frontier—barely hanging on, thanks to a fleabag hotel, a saloon, and steady work from the mining company—a conventional setting that the film's narrative uses to defy expectations and comment on audiences' illusions about settlement and survival in the West.

McCabe holds himself apart from the townsfolk. He is too clever by half, and the squalid shacks and lack of women spell opportunity to the gambler-turned-businessman. With three small tents and three world-worn women, he opens a makeshift whorehouse, where the sex is as isolating and lackluster as the wilderness on the other side of the canvas flap. Mrs. Miller (Julie Christie), a woman who knows her way around a bordello, arrives in town and convinces McCabe that they should partner. She is a woman of vision, and under her watchful and insistent eye, the construction of a "proper" whorehouse is completed, and the establishment comes to life. Mrs. Miller persuades McCabe that the trappings of "civilization" matter, and that more refined pursuit of pleasure will loosen the purses of the men of Presbyterian Church and make them both rich. She brings "class" to McCabe's frontier whorehouse: clean linens, mandatory baths, and higher rates for pleasure than McCabe thought possible. Considered "wild" herself, by the standards of Eastern civilization, she nonetheless succeeds in taming her own small corner of the Wild West and domesticating male space—at least within the limitations of her profession and the confines of the bordello. Indeed, in a frontier that gave birth to countless icons of masculine prowess and ingenuity, it is Mrs. Miller alone who asserts dominance over (human) nature through her business sense and foresight.

In the midst of Altman's muted Western landscape, its puddles of mud blended with evergreen and snow, McCabe's establishment provides some of the few glimmers of vibrant color and warmth uncharacteristic of the world outside—lingering images of playfulness and laughing faces, lit by warm, yellow lamplight. Within these frames, McCabe's whorehouse takes on a liminal quality—serving as a spectacle of gaiety and sexuality that is betwixt and between Western cultures—neither frontier nor "civilization," but containing bits of each. McCabe *also* contains bits of each, as this flawed character wrestles with inner demons in monologue, struggling between hero and anti-hero: "There's poetry in me, Constance," he argues to the absent Mrs. Miller, a hero trying, too late, to emerge. He longs for a love that transcends the harshness of the frontier and the realities of the whorehouse, but even those desires are denied by Altman's cynical challenge to prevailing notions of a romantic West.

The power of frontier nihilism overtakes the pair full force when the mining company tries to buy out McCabe. His vanity and bravado lead him arrogantly to reject the company's offers, until the company stops negotiating and sends hired guns to do their talking. Desperate panic grips McCabe, but his foolishness cannot be undone. He consults a lawyer (William Devane), who convinces him to take a stand against the corporation and become a representative of the frontier spirit: "If men stop dying for freedom, freedom itself will be dead." And of course, McCabe's demise is clearly written. He is trapped within a deadly game of cat-and-mouse with the gunmen while the local church burns—the townspeople are unaware of his plight as they try to salvage what seems to be their single moment of civilization and redemption, too late concerned with its presence, real or symbolic, in their lives. As he dies alone, McCabe is silently covered by drifting snow—a perversely gentle act offered up by a harsh wilderness landscape.

In the end, Altman's West, as portrayed in *McCabe and Mrs. Miller*, encompasses not one landscape but many; a landscape of minds as much as mountains. It is not one idea,

but a range of closely held values and beliefs that are sometimes perpetuated at great cost. The film reminds its audiences that the West resists the narrow confines of traditional renderings. It is a West that casts a critical eye on the ways that history has been invented and narrated, and reminds us that the frontier was a rapidly evolving social, political, and economic landscape, and that those changes were most acutely felt, and often, best portrayed, by characters not typically present in mainstream cinematic narratives.

See also: Altman, Robert; Western, The; Beatty, Warren

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—Cynthia J. Miller

MEET ME IN ST. LOUIS. *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1944) is considered one of the greatest movie musicals of all time. It was originally intended as a straight drama, but Arthur Freed, head of musical production at MGM, lobbied to get the film produced as a vehicle for Judy Garland, and commissioned Vincente Minnelli to direct. Minnelli, a veteran of the Broadway stage, had already directed two Hollywood musicals. Freed convinced the executives at MGM that with Minnelli at the helm, *Meet Me in St. Louis* would be a smashing success.

Minnelli decided to film the movie in Technicolor, even though using the process was expensive. Although the dazzling color heightened the beauty of the costumes and settings, romanticizing the world of 1903 St. Louis, Minnelli was determined to make the audience *believe* what was happening on screen. Forced to contend with the two most unrealistic aspects of the musical—the passage of time, and the inclusion of musical numbers—Minnelli split the film into four discrete segments, one for each season of the year. This allowed screenwriters Irving Brecher and Fred F. Finklehoffe to adapt the script from a series of disjointed vignettes by the *New Yorker's* Sally Benson. To deal with the lack of realism presented by characters who suddenly break out in song and dance, Minnelli integrated the musical numbers as natural elements of the film's narrative flow—except for the famous “Trolley Song,” which breaks out among riders on a public conveyance, all of the numbers emerge organically as part of the story.

The film traces the lives of the four daughters of the Smith family through the eyes of Esther (Garland). It begins in the summer of 1903, and ends in the spring of 1904, with the arrival of the World's Fair. We are brought into the serene lives of the Smiths as Esther pines for John Truett (Tom Drake), the boy next door. In an effort to get them together, Rose (Lucille Bremer) invites John to a party. John watches Esther and Tootie (the Oscar-winning Margaret O'Brien) sing for the guests, and Esther

tentatively courts a confused John. The summer ends with a group trip to the unfinished fairgrounds, during which their relationship progresses.

Halloween: dressed as ghouls, Tootie and Agnes (Joan Carroll) get into trouble, and Tootie comes home with a split lip and bruises. When questioned, she says that John hurt her. Esther runs to John's house and attacks him but later discovers that John actually saved Tootie and Agnes from being run over by a trolley they attempted to derail. Esther again goes to John, this time to apologize, and he kisses her. Floating home from the encounter, Esther is shocked to learn that her father (Leon Ames) has received a promotion that will relocate the family to New York, a move that will require them to leave the safety and security of St. Louis.

Winter: the girls are getting ready for the holiday ball. Rose's beau, Warren (Robert Sully), accompanies Easterner Lucille Ballard (June Lockhart), to Rose and Lon's (Harry H. Daniels Jr.) dismay; though all is ultimately resolved. John proposes and Esther accepts, only to realize that she is neither ready to be married nor to leave her family. Conflicted, she finds Tootie, worried about whether Santa will be able to find them if they move to New York. Tootie doesn't believe Esther's assurances, and cannot be consoled. Mr. Smith witnesses the scene, and is filled with doubt. He calls an impromptu family meeting to announce that he has changed his mind. He assures them that St. Louis is the city of the future, filled with innovation and American spirit.

Spring 1904: The Smiths are arrayed in finery for the fair, and all of the happy couples are off to witness the future. In the final shots, everyone gathers together to watch the city lit up by electric lights: "I can't believe it," says Esther of this new American experience. "Right here where we live. Right here in St. Louis."

Nominated for eight Academy Awards, *Meet Me in St. Louis* embodied the utopian values of mid-twentieth-century America. Devastated by the Depression and the horror of World War II, audiences were transported to another, simpler time and place, where the acceptance of appropriate notions of family and gender roles insured that dreams really could come true.

See also: Music in Film; Musical, The

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—Caitlin Gallogly

MEMENTO. Director Christopher Nolan's groundbreaking film *Memento* (2000) takes the psychological thriller subgenre to new heights, using a number of tactics and devices that have helped to reshape the perception of mainstream film. *Memento* catches up with Leonard, played by Guy Pearce, who suffers from anterograde amnesia caused by a head injury he received years before. Leonard's condition affects his short-term memory, rendering him incapable of keeping new memories for more than a few



Scene from the 2001 film *Memento*, starring Guy Pearce. Directed by Christopher Nolan. (Photofest)

minutes. Details of Leonard's condition develop throughout the film, as we follow him on his hunt for someone he calls John G.—the man Leonard believes broke into his house, raped and murdered his wife, and caused his head injury. Written by Nolan with his brother Jonathan, author of the source short story “Memento Mori,” *Memento* deviates from traditional Hollywood filmic texts by providing audiences with confusing and disorienting sequences that are meant to mimic Leonard's skewed perspective on reality.

Nolan's choice to tell Leonard's story through two competing narrative styles is perhaps the film's most obvious departure from the normative Hollywood style of filmmaking. The main story is depicted in reverse-

chronological order, while background information is given to the audience through intercut, forward-chronological sequences. The reverse-chronological sequences are always shot in color, folding the story back upon itself from end to beginning. The forward-chronological sequences are always shot in black and white. These scenes are what Nolan refers to as the “documentary style objective view of the character,” and they are meant to provide more and more background information through Leonard's phone conversations in his motel room. We return to this setting intermittently, breaking up the colorful reverse narrative that follows Leonard backward on his quest to find John G.

If the combination of two opposing chronologies isn't enough to disorient the audience, Nolan heightens the effect with short scenes, deceptive camera angles, tight close-ups and flashbacks. Flashbacks further amplify the confusion of the time and place of

Leonard's "time and place," as it is already unclear how the forward and reverse sequences relate to one another chronologically. With the addition of flashbacks that offer glimpses of Leonard's previous life, Nolan breaks his rules of color versus black and white. Thus, flashbacks of Leonard's interactions with his wife are in color, while those dealing with a man he knew from a former insurance claim are in black and white.

The film's textual elements are enhanced by framing and shot selection. Though Leonard's words are almost exclusively focused on his condition and quest, shots of Leonard's text-based tattoos, photographs, and memory fragments encourage questions about friendship, justice, and human identity. Because Leonard has no lasting memories since his injury, we quickly learn how easily he is manipulated by others. We get to know other people as Leonard does—through snapshot encounters. Despite Leonard's very specific system of written and visual record keeping (he takes Polaroid pictures and keeps meticulous notes to remind him of faces and important information), others must remind him of the details of previous interactions. Leonard is skeptical of every encounter, but has no choice but to trust others, as long as their information is consistent with his own peculiar record-keeping system, although the two never quite seem to mesh. Leonard's textual tattoos, which he creates, provide crucial data in his quest to locate John G. These, along with sticky notes, a map on the wall, and a Polaroid camera are virtually the only elements that make up Leonard's identity as we, and Leonard, know it. Contrary to the life seen through flashbacks, Leonard no longer has use for his home or material possessions—even his clothes and car have been taken from someone else's life.

Through the use of competing narrative structures, intermittent black-and-white and color sequences, flashbacks, and unusual camera choices, *Memento's* unique design has helped to change the language of mainstream film. By manipulating time and creating clashes in imagery, Nolan is able to break away from traditional Hollywood narrative devices and challenge audiences to come as close as possible to experiencing Leonard's condition firsthand.

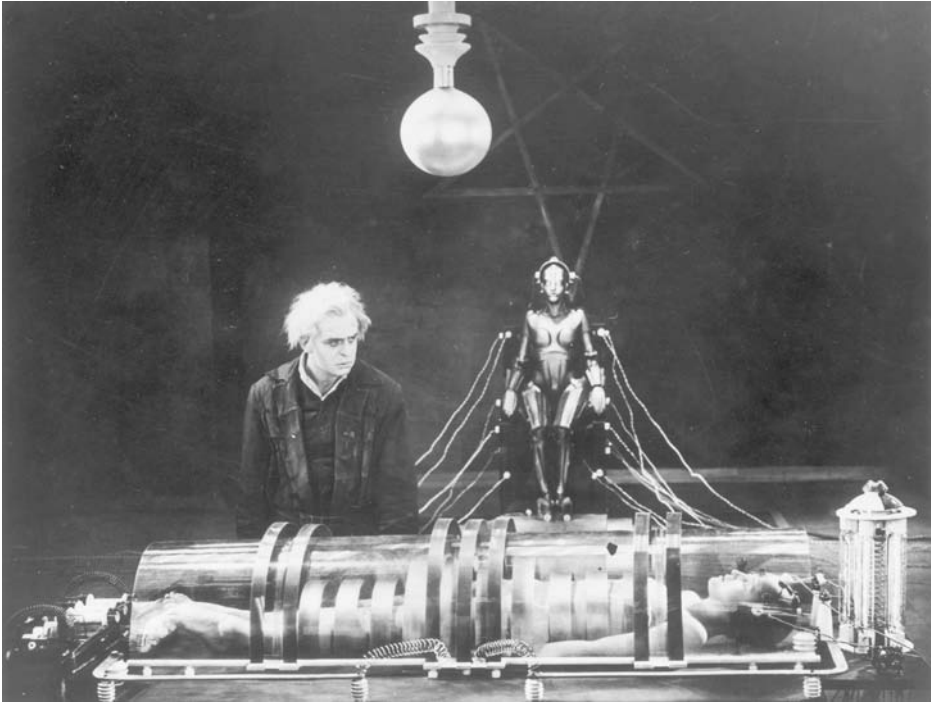
See also: Editing

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—Adam Dean

METROPOLIS. Based on a novel by Thea von Harbou, *Metropolis* (1927) is a silent film directed by German-born filmmaker Fritz Lang. An expressionist work that weaves together symbolism, distorted mise-en-scène, and a convoluted narrative, the picture consciously blends elements of the gothic and science fiction to convey an early



Rudolf Klein-Rogge watches over Brigitte Helm, whose body is connected with electric wires to a robot in a still from director Fritz Lang's film *Metropolis*. (Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

twentieth-century socialist message, while, perhaps unconsciously, it gives expression to an antifeminist message.

In the futuristic city of *Metropolis*, where airplanes and elevated roads run between and around towering buildings, the contrast between capitalists and workers is represented by sun-kissed towers, where the privileged while away their lives blissfully, and forbidding underground rooms, where dispossessed workers struggle to survive. In the above-ground world of light, the capitalists enjoy sports, gardens, libraries, and theaters, while in an underground world of darkness, workers suffer exhaustion, hopelessness, and death. The plot, in which the miserable working class revolts and is reluctantly embraced by the capitalists, is narrated through the love story of Freder, son of Joh Fredersen, master of *Metropolis*, and Maria, the politically minded daughter of a worker, and their efforts to unite a society starkly divided by class.

Before they meet, Freder lives a life of pleasure amid sun-drenched backdrops, fountains, and lovely girls, remaining ignorant of life below the city, while Maria gives hope to the suffering masses living and working underground. A savior will come, she says, who will mediate between the planners who dream of towers and the toilers on whose misery their dream depends. Freder first meets Maria when she brings the workers' children to see the Eternal Garden, where he is being entertained. Captivated, he tries to follow her, but instead finds the hall of machines. Here, he sees laborers tending massive

machines and witnesses an explosion that kills or injures several men. Freder is filled with compassion, and has a vision in which the great machine is Moloch and the workers are human sacrifices. Freder's view of the machines as evil is borne out by subsequent events.

Fredersen, who is afraid of Maria's influence on the workers and is unaware of his son's involvement with her, tells the inventor Rotwang to lock her up, imprint her form on a robot, and send her to the workers to undermine their belief in Maria. But Rotwang secretly commands robot-Maria to incite the workers to destroy Metropolis. They sabotage the machines, causing a flood, and then, believing their children drowned, burn robot-Maria at the stake. Meanwhile Freder, who realizes that robot-Maria is a fake, finds the real Maria trying to rescue the children and helps her save them. The film ends on the steps to the tower, where Fredersen rejoins Freder, whom he thought was dead, and Freder mediates between his father and the workers.

The film is rich in symbolism, conveyed through character, narrative, imagery, and mise-en-scène, including the retelling of the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel with capitalists and workers failing to understand each other; workers acting as the hands and capitalists the head of society; and the heart representing the conciliatory factor that alone can bring hand and head together. The idea that the workers are the hands of society, for example, is expressed in an image of the masses marching in five columns that come together at one end, like a hand. The evils of capitalism are shown in the misery of the workers and in the link between capitalists, sin, and Moloch. The female robot is a sexualized representation of Moloch, created and used by capitalists to manipulate the workers. But she is also a vamp who leads men to kill each other. Even Freder is caught up in her sexually tinged evil. After finding Maria (secretly a robot) with his father, he envisions the seven deadly sins moving toward him. *Metropolis's* evil machines suggest a fear of technology, not just for workers but for the masters as well. The robot, however, is both alluring and evil, a characterization that, especially in its contrast with Maria's maternal saintliness, suggests a subtext: the myth of woman as virgin and whore and the masculine fear of female sexuality, projected onto a story of conflict among capitalist, worker, and machine.

See also: Lang, Fritz; Science Fiction Film, The; Silent Era, The

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—Susan de Gaia

MIDNIGHT COWBOY. There is a scene in John Schlesinger's *Midnight Cowboy* (1969) in which the lead character, Joe Buck (Jon Voight), uses the end of his shirt to dry the hair of his best friend, Ratso Rizzo (Dustin Hoffman). Ratso is sick, dying in fact, and running a fever. As Joe attempts to dry the sweat from his head, Ratso closes his eyes and affectionately (but very weakly) embraces Joe. The moment lasts only a couple of seconds, but more than any other shot, it reveals the film's emotional core. *Midnight Cowboy* is often remembered for its then-controversial subject matter—prostitution and homosexuality—but at its heart it is a love story between two drifters, one an inexperienced Texan who comes to New York City with the hope of pleasuring Park Avenue women for money, the other a street-smart social pariah living on the margins of New York society. Both men are in trouble, both are outsiders, and it is at this existential nexus that each finds the other.

Based on the 1965 novel by James Leo Herlihy, *Midnight Cowboy* chronicles the devastating experiences of Joe as he attempts to furnish a life for himself as a high-class gigolo. Upon arriving in New York, Joe positions himself as the embodiment of what Park Avenue women want—a rugged southern man who can satisfy their libidos—only to realize his cowboy image is a bigger draw among homosexuals than uptown “dames.” From here, Joe meets Ratso and the two become business partners, then comrades, and later soul mates, but not before Ratso swindles Joe out of some money, leaving him nearly penniless. Through Ratso, the audience is introduced to



Jon Voight (left) and Dustin Hoffman pose in a still from *Midnight Cowboy*, 1968. The film was the first studio production to receive an X-rating from the Motion Picture Association of America, but won three Oscars nonetheless. (Liaison Dist./Liaison)

the film's third key "character," the subterranean culture of late 1960s 42nd Street, where prostitution, drugs, and homosexuality exist openly in what appears to be a milieu enveloped by gloom and despair. Schlesinger, with the help of his cinematographer Adam Holender, accentuates the cold, dirty atmosphere of 42nd Street by shooting these scenes in grainy blue hues and contrasting it with the bright color palettes of Florida, Ratso's Nirvana. Despite his early premonitions, Joe is not a very good gigolo, and as Ratso becomes increasingly ill the two decide to head south to Florida, a symbol of health and nourishment—the antithesis of New York. It also represents maturity, as the naive Joe Buck, recognizing his dreams of sex and comfort are unrealistic, sheds his youthful cowboy persona and embraces the responsibilities of adulthood—in particular, his altruistic devotion to Ratso's well-being.

The film's strengths reside in its honesty, expressed through its casting and settings. Schlesinger went out of his way to cast local nonactors whose faces captured the specific regional environments depicted in his narrative. The same approach was used when scouting locations. Grungy street corners, dilapidated apartment buildings, and shotgun diners seem meticulously selected to sell the film's authenticity. This is equally true of its sets. A scene staged in what is meant to be a party at Andy Warhol's studio is said to have been carefully constructed by the set designers and Warhol himself to replicate the famous Factory. In this way, *Midnight Cowboy* reveals to contemporary audiences a New York City of bygone years; a pre-Disneyfied era when 42nd Street was still a place of vice and sexual nonconformity where the avant-garde pop culture manufactured by Warhol acted as a surreal bridge between the worlds of civility and subversion.

The film's documentarylike exposition of New York City's underworld of sex, prostitution, and homosexuality rendered it controversial when it was released in 1969; it also garnered it a dreaded "X rating"—no one under 18 allowed—which limited its distribution to select theatres across the country. Despite these handicaps, the film was critically well received, earning seven Academy Award nominations and winning three, including Best Picture. For all its controversy and radical artistic vision (it employed an expressionistic style of editing and cinematography that became characteristic of the New Hollywood era during the late 1960s and 1970s), *Midnight Cowboy's* power derives from the vulnerability displayed between Joe and Ratso, whose mutual quest for love and acceptance remains timeless.

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—Ryan J. Kirkby

MILLION DOLLAR BABY. *Million Dollar Baby* (2004) is the story of Maggie Fitzgerald (Hilary Swank), who wants to box; Frankie Dunn (Clint Eastwood), an overly cautious trainer; and “Scrap Iron” Dupris (Morgan Freeman), an ex boxer who works in Dunn’s gym. This film explores success, love, faith, human frailty, and choice in Maggie and Frankie, while Scrap Iron narrates behind the scenes. The film represents the growing importance of success for American women, through a classic icon of American film, the boxer’s story. It was adapted for the screen from F. X. Toole’s 2000 fiction collection *Rope Burns*.

Boxing is an especially apt means for exploring the irony of strength and vulnerability in a character and of the individual’s relationship to society, themes this film complicates in interesting ways with a female in a typically male role. Certainly, the relationship that develops between Maggie and Frankie is different than any boxer-trainer relationship in the history of American film. Frankie is almost squeamish about the dangers of boxing and has a history of holding his boxers back. His tendency to overprotect raises issues about the changing place of women in American society, as he struggles to define himself in relation to his estranged daughter, who sends his letters back unopened, and to Maggie, who becomes the daughter he is determined not to fail.

The question of Frankie’s success or failure as a father reveals the use of boxing as a metaphor for the success or failure of American attitudes toward women. Like 1980s films about women integrating into the workplace, *Million Dollar Baby* shows a woman succeeding in an arena previously belonging to men. But, while those films tended to



Scene from the 2004 film *Million Dollar Baby*, starring Clint Eastwood and Hilary Swank. Directed by Clint Eastwood. (Photofest)

show ideal working women as ultrafeminine, like Dolly Parton in *Nine to Five* (1980) and Melanie Griffith in *Working Girl* (1988), Maggie is physically and emotionally tough. Even among tough women in film, though, her strength is exceptional, as it derives from training and practice rather than superpowers, virtual reality, or guns.

The development of Frankie's character depends on giving up control. When he first meets Maggie, he refuses to train a girl. Maggie wins him over, and he trains and manages her career. But in his determination to succeed with her where he failed with his daughter, Frankie supports Maggie's choices no matter how self-destructive they are. With Maggie's rising success in the ring, he begins to set her up with ever more dangerous fights, until finally she faces "Billy the Blue Bear" for the World Welterweight Championship. Known as a dirty fighter, Billy knocks Maggie down with an illegal blow, and she awakens in the hospital with a severe spinal cord injury. Finding her situation unbearable, Maggie asks Frankie to help her die.

The film's ending angered many, as it seemed to suggest that death is preferable to life with a disability. But in light of Frankie's character, his determination to do right by Maggie where he failed his daughter, and the issue of women's self-determination that the film suggests, his actions hint that America may be ready to let women make their own choices and live, or die, with the consequences. In this light, the medical establishment in the film, which protects Maggie from attempted suicide, is aligned with the paternalism of an earlier time in American culture. In contrast, Frankie's decision to support her choice works to legitimate it, through the casting and character of good guy Frankie Dunn.

It is ironic, given his avoidance of harmful situations, that Frankie decides to assist Maggie's suicide. It is also ironic that his decision to let her fight dangerous opponents was motivated by compassion. But the ultimate irony is in Maggie's decision to die. As a boxer, Maggie's success depended on the will to fight, while suicide, many would argue, is a form of giving up. As Maggie sees it, however, she is fighting to escape a miserable life.

Million Dollar Baby succeeded in developing a believable female boxer who risks everything to follow her dream. Like that very popular boxer in American film, Rocky Balboa, Maggie is an underdog in her story. She also represents a group of underdogs in American life—female boxers, and perhaps by extension, women in general. This film not only helped give women's boxing legitimacy; it succeeded as a film by telling the story of a passionate fighter who happens to be a woman.

See also: Eastwood, Clint; Sports Film, The

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—Susan de Gaia

MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET. *Miracle on 34th Street* has been regarded as a classic Christmas season offering since the original version of the film was released in 1947; the film was remade and rereleased in 1994. Adapted from the novella by Valentine Davies (who won an Academy Award for Best Writing, Original Story), the popular picture was nominated for the Best Picture Academy Award in 1947. The original version of the film takes place in New York City after the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, and tells the story of a little girl, Susan Walker (Natalie Wood), who does not believe in Santa—until she meets him in the Macy's department store. Susan has been influenced by her pragmatic, though well-meaning mother, Doris (Maureen O'Hara), who wishes to protect her daughter from the disappointment that comes with discovering the mundane truths that lie behind those things in the world that seem so wonderfully magical, including mythical beings such as Santa. Susan's mother works for Macy's, and Susan is well aware that actors are hired to play Santa in the store's children's department; Susan, then, has empirical evidence that Santa is purely an invention created for commercial gain. However, she comes to believe that Santa is real once she encounters Kris Kringle, an elderly gentleman who sincerely believes he is Santa, and who is employed as the store's Santa after the man initially hired to play the part in the parade arrives drunk.



John Payne (left), Maureen O'Hara, Edmund Gwenn (dressed as Santa Claus), and a young Natalie Wood stand before a Christmas tree in a still from director George Seaton's film *Miracle on 34th Street*. (Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

Significantly, Santa Claus became a major figure in movies only after World War II, as America climbed out of the Depression and became the “Affluent Society” of the 1950s. Prior to the original version of *Miracle on 34th Street*, Santa had made very few film appearances. The emergence of a postwar consumer culture, it may be argued, was needed to bring the mythical figure of Santa to celluloid life in the shape of Kris Kringle. Indeed, that *Miracle on 34th Street* connects Santa to the Macy’s parade highlights the fact that this mythical figure and shopping co-exist, as the traditional Thanksgiving day extravaganza is generally considered the inaugural moment of the nation’s annual period of Christmastime consumption.

The name Kringle is related to the German term *Christkindlein*, meaning a messenger of God or gift-bearer; and the Kringle of *Miracle on 34th Street* does seem to have magical, even miraculous, powers. Portrayed by Edmund Gwenn in the 1947 film (he won the Oscar for Best Supporting Actor, one of the film’s four Academy Awards), Kringle speaks many languages, allowing him to talk to a Dutch girl who is distraught at being away from her family during the Christmas season. (In the 1994 version, Kringle, now played by the avuncular Richard Attenborough, communicates with a deaf child using sign language). It is this ability to truly communicate with all children that proves to the audience that Kringle is the real Santa. Of course, what makes Kringle miraculous is not simply that he is a gifted polyglot, but that his powers of communication allow him to connect, almost on a spiritual level, with each and every child—and that they, and we, know that he truly understands them.

The 1994 remake goes even further than the 1947 version, suggesting that Kringle is more than enchanting and magical; the later version hints that Kringle may have genuinely miraculous powers. Several times in the latter film, for instance, Kringle and God are referred to in the same sentence; an asylum warden genuflects before Kringle; and Kringle, like Jesus, proclaims himself a symbol of hope in a time of hateful selfishness. The later version also provides audiences with a courtroom scene in which Kringle’s Christlike nature is emphasized. In an attempt to assist Bryan (Dylan McDermott), Kringle’s attorney, who is involved with Susan’s mother Doris (Elizabeth Perkins), in proving that Kringle is, indeed, Santa—Kringle will be committed to an asylum if Bryan cannot make his case—Susan (Mara Wilson) hands the presiding judge a Christmas card containing a banknote bearing the words “In God We Trust.” Not only does this nationalistic motto blur the boundaries between church and state, here it also suggests that while there is no conclusive proof of God’s existence, the American people at least have *faith* that God exists. If faith alone is enough to prove that God exists, reasons Bryan, then surely it is enough to prove that Kris Kringle is Santa.

Miracle on 34th Street not only suggests that faith is sufficient to make something real, it also implies that our faith will be rewarded, both spiritually and materially. Thus, in the 1947 version, Susan’s newfound belief in Santa will apparently bring her the father for whom she longs—Doris and Kringle’s attorney, Fred (John Payne), we are assured, will eventually be married. Interestingly, in the remake, Susan’s faith is rewarded by Kringle granting her a wish. Earlier in the film, Susan tells Kringle that she will believe that he is Santa only if he can provide her with a father—and a house. In the end, Susan does gain the father she desires when, in the manner of the original

film, her mother marries Kringle's attorney, Bryan. Now, though, the newly formed family also receives a house that they can make into a home. For modern audiences, it seems, spiritual well-being must be accompanied by material comforts.

See also: Coming-of-Age Film, The

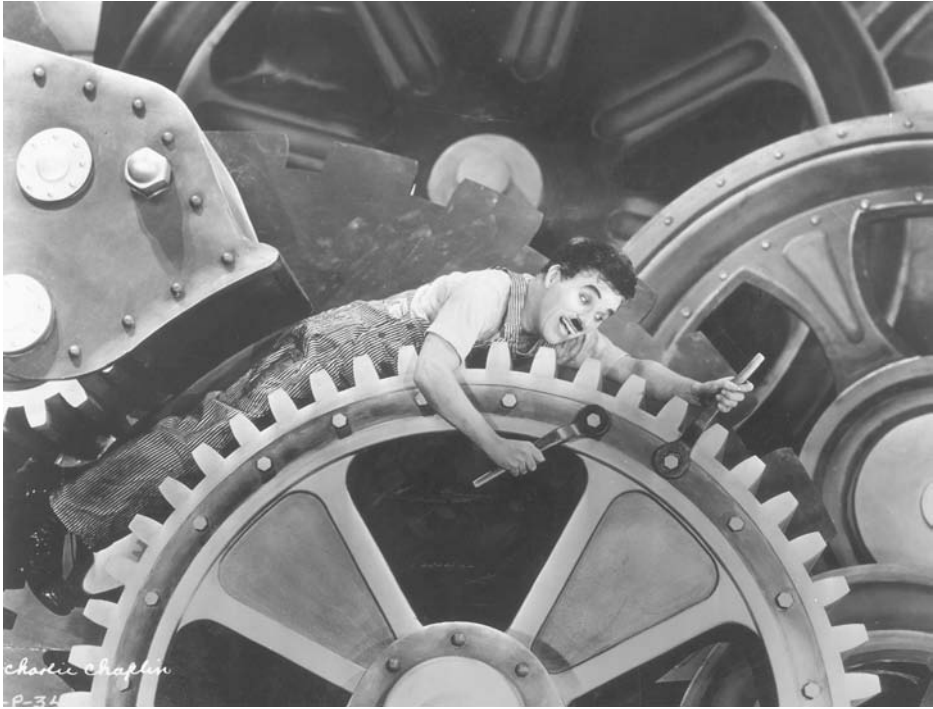
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—Victoria Williams

MODERN TIMES. In Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times* (1936), Chaplin used the adventures of the lovable, familiar character of the Tramp to highlight the injustice of American industrial capitalism amid the Great Depression. Based in part on Chaplin's working class background in England and his extensive travels—including a tour of the Ford Motor plant and discussions with individuals such as socialist author Upton Sinclair, *Modern Times* represented a departure from the more conventional American comedies that dominated the 1930s. Chaplin served as director, producer, composer, and, as the lead character, remained silent as the film used only background sounds. The result was an entertaining comedy that appealed to the general public while including a scathing indictment of the ways in which management, technology, and law enforcement conspired to dehumanize workers. Together with two later Chaplin films, *The Great Dictator* (1940) and *Monsieur Verdoux* (1947), *Modern Times* signaled Chaplin's emergence as an artist committed to the kind of politically relevant films that fueled decades of FBI investigations and his eventual departure for Europe.

Modern Times opens with the declaration that the film is "a story of industry, of individual enterprise—humanity crusading in the pursuit of happiness." Chaplin juxtaposes his reference to the Declaration of Independence with depictions of a herd of sheep and faceless, anonymous laborers entering a factory for a day of work. The tramp joins the workers on an assembly line only to discover that the heartless company president controls the relentless pace of the meaningless, repetitive work. The "Electro Steel Corporation" uses modern technology to invade the workers' privacy during breaks and, in a hilarious scene that symbolized the goal of reducing human workers to productive machines, the Tramp finds himself strapped to a mechanical feeding machine designed to enable workers to eat while on the assembly line. The machine's impracticality—the Tramp is more abused than fed—is both funny and a dire warning regarding the power of modern work to rob individuals of personal autonomy. Soon Chaplin's character is driven mad by the assembly line; and, in the film's most



Actor and director Charles Chaplin, wearing overalls and holding a wrench, sits on an enormous set of gears in a still from his film *Modern Times*. (Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

emblematic scene, the Tramp is literally consumed by work as the acrobatic Chaplin travels through the huge gears of the factory system.

After his arrest, the Tramp spends time in both prison and a mental hospital and falls in love with a young girl played by Paulette Goddard, Chaplin's third wife. The young girl's father has been killed in a food riot, and much of the film revolves around the couple's many confrontations with unsympathetic police determined to control the increasing number of unemployed. At one point, the Tramp is accidentally swept up in a revolutionary labor demonstration and returns to prison, a place he finds far happier and secure than the modern factory. The Tramp remains a kind, innocent figure increasingly marginalized by a social order committed more to exploitation and class hierarchy than democracy.

Despite a plot centered on class inequalities within American life, *Modern Times* also reflected aspects of middle-class sensibility as the Tramp is hopelessly optimistic. In a fantasy sequence, the Tramp and his love interest achieve the dream of middle-class domestic tranquility with security and homeownership. The film concludes with the pair, happy yet still homeless and marginalized, walking hand in hand into the sunset.

The production of *Modern Times* from 1933 to 1936 generated substantial rumors as to its political message, and its debut did little to dampen such discussions. The film grossed \$1.4 million, less than Chaplin's three previous films, and

only made a profit with foreign distribution. Promotion of the film downplayed its political significance, but Chaplin's apparent goal of a profitable mainstream film with a progressive dose of social realism proved difficult. Critics on the left generally lauded *Modern Times*, yet Chaplin distanced himself from rumors that communists contributed to the film that only escalated after positive reviews in radical publications such as the *Daily Worker* and *Pravda*, the official newspaper of the Soviet Union. The FBI began investigating Chaplin during the 1920s and such harassment, which included the Internal Revenue Service, only intensified during World War II and the renewed conservatism of the Cold War. Chaplin left the United States for Switzerland in 1952.

See also: Chaplin, Charlie

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—Richard L. Hughes

MOULIN ROUGE! *Moulin Rouge!* (2001) is a multiple-award-winning and popular film musical directed by Baz Luhrmann. It tells the story of Christian (Ewan McGregor), a young poet who makes his way to Paris during the “summer of love” of 1899. Once there, he joins a team of Bohemian actors and playwrights who are preparing a new musical play for the Moulin Rouge, a nightclub that Christian describes as a “kingdom of night-time pleasures.” On the evening that they present their ideas to Harold Zidler (Jim Broadbent), the owner of the Moulin Rouge, Christian meets and falls in love with the famous singer and courtesan Satine (Nicole Kidman). She also falls in love with him, but their blossoming relationship is threatened by the arrival of the Duke (Richard Roxburgh), who has demanded Satine in exchange for the money Zidler needs to transform the Moulin Rouge into a real theater (and Satine into a real actress). The ensuing conflict between Christian and the Duke over Satine's attention and affection plays out as a battle between the desire for material security and the rewards of true love.

Moulin Rouge! follows in the tradition of the backstage musical. Like all such musicals (and arguably all film musicals), it is highly self-reflective (Everett, 2008). The film foregrounds issues of performance and commercial music making through “Spectacular Spectacular” (the show-within-the-show), the setting at the Moulin Rouge, and the anachronistic use of several decades of contemporary popular music within the soundtrack. It also exhibits awareness of the history of musicals (by borrowing text and music from *The Sound of Music*) and the expanding interest in Bollywood film in America today.

By using contemporary popular music, especially “Your Song,” “All You Need Is Love,” and “Pride (In the Name of Love),” the production team further emphasizes the themes of personal authenticity and authentic love—embodied in the Bohemians’ oft-repeated slogan “Truth, Beauty, Freedom, Love”—that are at the center of the plots of both “Spectacular Spectacular” and the framing narrative of the film. The conceit of authenticity sits at the heart of American popular song culture, encompassing matters of performance persona, musical style, and textual or emotional expression, particularly in songs related to love. Furthermore, this dedication to the aesthetic of authenticity merges with broadly held commitments within American society to authenticity as the hallmark of acceptable personal, social, and political behavior. As a result, popular culture regularly construes the quality of love as the principal marker of personal character and integrity. The recurring lyric (from the song “Nature Boy”), “the greatest thing you’ll ever learn is just to love and be loved in return,” which also is heard in both the play and the framing narrative, echoes this phenomenon. Therefore, *Moulin Rouge!* again displays its self-reflective nature as a film musical by incorporating these important aesthetic and social tenets of American society and popular culture.

This is not to say that the film necessarily endorses these tenets. Several narrative and production techniques in *Moulin Rouge!* highlight the conventionality (and thus artificiality) of the plot, disrupt the suspension of disbelief, create ironic distance, or undermine the thematic and plot emphases on authenticity and authentic love. For example, the proscenium arch and rising/falling red curtain that appear at both ends of *Moulin Rouge!* imply that the entire film is a collective fantasy that is not quite believable. The abrupt cessation of empathetic orchestral underscoring—which sounds as if a record player is suddenly switched off—at the moment when Satine realizes that Christian is a writer rather than a nobleman gently mocks both film conventions and audience expectations. Most telling, however, is Satine’s comment to Christian that the courtesan is paid to make men believe what they want to believe. Together these suggest that commercial entertainment culture also functions as a societal courtesan who is paid to give people what they want to see, hear, and feel. In that case, the emphasis on authenticity and love found so readily in contemporary America is itself a cultural commodity, and so the film’s refrain of “truth, beauty, freedom, love” is self-serving and may ultimately ring hollow.

See also: Musical, The; Music in Film

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—Stanley C. Pelkey II

MR. DEEDS GOES TO TOWN. Frank Capra's *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* aimed to please the Depression-era audiences of 1936. The film offered viewers a chance to laugh while also creating a space for reflection on some of the era's significant issues. The film tells the story of an unlikely heir to a fortune and the lengths to which he has to go in order to give it away.

Screenwriter Robert Ruskin developed the screenplay from Clarence Budington Kelland's serialized 1935 story from *American Mercury* magazine, "Opera Hat." In the film, Gary Cooper's Longfellow Deeds inherits a \$20 million estate. Coming to Manhattan from Mandrake Falls, Vermont, Deeds moves awkwardly among the city's elites.

Jean Arthur's Louise "Babe" Bennett offers Deeds a romantic peer. A reporter for the *New York Mail*, Bennett competes against male reporters for the opportunity to infiltrate Deeds's entourage in search of material for racy headlines. A tough-talking, sophisticated reporter with a heart of gold, Bennett poses as a stenographer in order to befriend Deeds. Ultimately, she falls in love with him. Even as she does so, however, she continues to write newspaper articles ridiculing his behavior as "Cinderella Man."

One drunken evening, Deeds feeds donuts to a horse, prompting a farmer, delirious with the hunger and frustration common to the era, to confront him: "All you ever thought of was pinching pennies, you money-grabbing hick. You never gave a thought to all those starving people standing in the breadlines, not knowing where their next meal was coming from."

Chagrined, Deeds tries to rectify the situation through philanthropy. He plans to distribute 10-acre farms to 2,000 families. In the film's most poignant scene, hundreds of shabby, jobless applicants crowd into Deeds's mansion, desperate for an opportunity to earn their own living.

Most of the remainder of the film depicts the efforts of capitalist lawyers to have Deeds declared mentally incompetent. Capra frames Deeds's philanthropy as humane, morally sound and in keeping with American values. Offering the unemployed not charity but the opportunity to earn a living, Deeds meets their needs without denying them self-respect. In marked contrast to Deeds's sensitivity, lawyers, politicians, and organized charities emerge as corrupt, greedy, and callous forces.

Deeds's own legal team charges him with insanity, worried that they will lose profits as a result of his philanthropic efforts. Deeds is subjected to a legal hearing to determine his mental competency. Individuals who had witnessed comical events earlier in the film reappear as witnesses, testifying to his alleged insanity. It falls to Bennett to make the case for Deeds. She declares her love for him, arguing that his ethic of philanthropy reflects greater sanity than that of the rest of those in attendance.

Capra would reprise these themes in *Meet John Doe* (1941). In that film, Cooper returns as John Willoughby, a former baseball player turned hobo. A newspaper presents a staff writer's columns and speeches as Willoughby's, as part of a publicity stunt. Filled with platitudes and vague anecdotes harkening to a mythic, simpler era when individuals trusted and aided one another, the articles inspire individuals to form voluntary associations. Quiet, meaningful scenes focus on the small-town residents who joined the "John Doe Clubs." They describe their communal efforts to

alleviate suffering and their befriending of social outcasts, including “Gruebel,” who ate from trash cans. Upon investigation, they had learned that he did this not out of eccentricity, but because accepting relief would wound his pride. They had found work for Gruebel and aid for other needy individuals within the community, without governmental assistance.

As in *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*, Capra posed private philanthropy and voluntarism as the most appropriate solutions to the era’s problems. Capra struggled to find a satisfying resolution to the film, ultimately shooting five endings, including one in which Doe commits suicide. Capra’s multilayered plots critiqued not only political leaders and media empires, but also the likeable characters whose idealistic values offered few practical solutions in the modern political realm.

Mr. Deeds Goes to Town was nominated for five Academy Awards, including Best Director, Best Screenplay (Robert Riskin), Best Actor (Gary Cooper), and Best Picture. In 2002, the film was remade as an Adam Sandler vehicle, *Mr. Deeds*.

See also: Capra, Frank

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—Ella Howard

MR. SMITH GOES TO WASHINGTON. Political films have long been popular with American audiences. Over the past 40 years, pictures such as Franklin Schaffner’s *The Best Man* (written by Gore Vidal), Sidney Lumet’s *All the President’s Men*, Oliver Stone’s *Nixon* and *JFK*, and Barry Levinson’s *Wag the Dog* and *Man of the Year* have sought to expose the often disquieting inner workings of politics. All of these films, it seems, owe much to director Frank Capra’s *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939). Released during Franklin Roosevelt’s second term in office and while the Depression still lingered, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* is representative of the cinematic social commentaries produced by Capra. Expressive of the mood and hopes of the time, its populist message resonates with other works made by Capra during 1930s and ’40s: *It Happened One Night*, *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*, *Meet John Doe*, and *It’s a Wonderful Life*.

The plot revolves around the appointment of Jefferson Smith to a vacant Senate seat. Smith, played by the irresistible Jimmy Stewart, is an idealist. The son of a crusading journalist who was murdered for attempts to expose corruption, he is exceedingly popular with a group of Boy Rangers in his district, who look up to him as one whose hopes and dreams still match their own, even as he has entered adulthood. They are ecstatic when they hear that one of the projects for which Smith hopes to gather

Congressional support is the building of a youth camp on vacant land that seems to have little value for anyone else.

Smith is taken under the wing of the state's senior senator, Joseph Paine (Claude Rains), a popular but crooked politician who happened to be the best friend of Smith's late father. On the train to Washington, Paine, who assumes a paternal attitude toward "the boy," shares fond, sentimental memories of Smith's father. Arriving in Washington and taking in the aura of the Capitol dome with an open-eyed gaze, Smith hops on a sightseeing bus, which visits the monuments of the nation's capital—most notably the Lincoln Memorial. Duly inspired, Smith enters his office ready to get to work. He is assisted by his secretary, the bright, energetic Clarissa Saunders (Jean Arthur). Known simply as "Saunders," she seems much more qualified for politics than does the rather naive Smith. Saunders's devoted journalist-friend Diz Moore (Thomas Mitchell) provides a cynical perspective as an insider newsman who can't quite believe that Smith is authentic or in any way cut out for the job he has assumed. Both he and Saunders are bemused and astonished to see Smith express his democratic ideals and reverence for the Constitution and refer to him as "Don Quixote." Indeed, Senator Paine tells Smith at one point that he is "fighting windmills." Satire and humor abound in this picture; but reflective of the majority of Capra's work, there are also unsettling moments of darkness.



In a scene from *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, Jimmy Stewart examines numerous letters from baskets as well as those littered on the floor of the Senate. The film, in which Stewart plays idealistic politician Jefferson Smith, was one of the first to portray the U.S. government as corrupt. (Library of Congress)

As expected, Smith confronts the agents of corruption he encounters in Washington, one of whom is Senator Paine, who is beholden to Boss Jim Taylor (Edward Arnold), a greedy and ruthless figure who has his own interests in Smith's home state. Seeking to expose the fraudulent activities of his Senate colleagues, Smith eventually loses all his allies in Washington, except for Saunders and a Senate staffer who continue to believe in him. The story builds to a climax when it is revealed that the land Smith intended to use to build his youth camp is coveted by Boss Taylor and Senator Paine, who will go to any lengths to acquire it. With Saunders's help, Smith fights on in Washington, while back at home the Boy Rangers struggle against Taylor's agents. In one of those Capraesque dark moments, the media makes Smith out to be the villain, leading him to be accused of corruption and fraud himself. As in other Capra films, however, the protagonist, on the verge of being overwhelmed, is ultimately redeemed.

Capra's populist social-commentary films, although sometimes criticized for being overly sentimental, not only gave expression to the despair suffered by those living through the Depression and WWII, but also held out hope that Americans could once again proclaim, "It's a wonderful life."

See also: Capra, Frank; Politics and Film

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—*Alexander Varias*

MUSIC MAN, THE. The film version of *The Music Man* (1962), produced and directed at Warner Bros. by Morton DaCosta, was based on Meredith Willson's Broadway hit, which ran for 1,375 performances beginning in 1957. The stage version earned eight Tonys, including Best Musical, and it was revived on Broadway in 1980 and again in 2000–01. In 2003, Disney Studios produced a television movie that featured Matthew Broderick and Kristin Chenoweth in the leading roles. Despite the later TV version, it is the 1962 film starring Robert Preston (reprising his Broadway role), Shirley Jones, and a powerful supporting cast that continues to define this film musical.

The plot, in the formula of golden age musicals, is a classic boy-meets-girl story, set in mythical River City, Iowa, in 1912. The title character, Professor Harold Hill (Preston), is a con man who travels by rail through America's heartland convincing small-town citizens of their need for a boys' band, even though he has neither plans nor the ability to create one. Once orders are taken and payments made for instruments, uniforms, and books, he makes off with the money and moves on to the next unsuspecting town. Also a ladies' man, Hill targets the River City librarian, Marian

Paroo (Jones), who initially rebuffs him, despite her mother's concern that he may be her very last chance" at happiness.

In the style of a revivalist preacher, Hill uses the opening of a pool hall to generate fear among the citizens that there's "Trouble, right here in River City!" The way to keep the devil out of the community is a boys' band. Hill's pitch raises the suspicion of Mayor Shinn (Paul Ford), who demands Hill's credentials. Hill slickly eludes the mayor and actively pursues Marian, since she is the most likely to expose him: she is the local piano teacher and also runs the town library, giving her access to information. His interest piques upon hearing gossip about Marian and the late Mr. Madison, who left the library to the town but "all the books to her." Ultimately Marian has a change of heart when she sees the magic Hill has worked on the town, and especially on her shy little brother, Winthrop (Ron Howard). In the end, she comes to love Hill, and tries to stop the town's hot pursuit of him once his scam is revealed. As it turns out, the boys have been learning music in his absence, and the story ends on the triumphant notes of "Seventy-Six Trombones."

One of the reasons for *The Music Man's* immense popularity was that it capitalized on America's nostalgia for the big production numbers of the classic age of the movie musical. Willson used America's longing for the past to his advantage in penning a number of timeless songs for the film including: "Being in Love" (replacing "White Knight" from the stage version), "Goodnight, My Someone" (the same tune as "Seventy-six Trombones"), and the now-standard "Till There Was You." The show's choreographers followed Willson's lead, presenting audiences with spectacular dance sequences that helped to move the narrative powerfully from point to point.

Given this nostalgia for a bygone era, however, 1960s America was not marked simply by a longing for an idealized past. It was also characterized by a certain tension between past and present, and between the lure of the city and the "family values" of rural life. *The Music Man* cleverly played on these tensions in ways that broadened its appeal. Viewers distressed by the rapid social changes of the Cold War/civil rights era could escape to a mythical mid-America, while others could appreciate the undertone of irony that complicated the film's bucolic setting and story.

The film's exceptional cast, memorable music, and superior production values led to its nomination for numerous cinematic awards. Singled out for six Academy Awards, including Best Picture, it won for Scoring of Music and Adaptation or Treatment, while splitting the Golden Globe for Best Musical or Comedy with *That Touch of Mink*. Proving the enduring popularity of the film and the high regard it still commands in the American cinematic community, *The Music Man* was added to the National Film Registry of the Library of Congress in 2005.

See also: Music in Film

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—Vicki L. Eaklor

MY DARLING CLEMENTINE. One of director John Ford's most acclaimed films, *My Darling Clementine* (1946) is, in part, a cinematic adaptation of Stuart N. Lake's book *Wyatt Earp: Frontier Marshall* (1931). Based on the story of the gunfight at the O.K. Corral, the film draws its plot from ongoing tension between the Earp brothers: Wyatt (Henry Fonda), Virgil (Tim Holt), Morgan (Ward Bond), and James (Don Garner); and the Clanton family: outlaw brothers Ike (Grant Withers) and Billy (John Ireland), led by Old Man Clanton (Walter Brennan). The film's title and theme song derive from the western folk ballad, "Oh My Darling, Clementine," signaling the centrality of the female lead in this tale of bringing civilization to the West.

Cited by the British Film Institute as Ford's most poetic western, the film reinterprets the classic showdown between good and evil, while at the same time telling the story of Wyatt Earp's brief stint as marshal, his friendship with Doc Holliday (Victor Mature), and his love for Clementine Carter (Cathy Downs). The troubled town of Tombstone is the site of a struggle not only for the characters' physical survival but for their moral welfare, as well. In this, Tombstone stands as a microcosm of the West and the struggle to create a new era of order and civilization on the frontier.

Set in 1882, the film opens as Wyatt Earp and his brothers, driving cattle westward to California, encounter the Clantons, who aggressively offer to "take the cattle off their hands." The Earps decline the offer but take Old Man Clanton's suggestion to ride into Tombstone, a "wide open town," leaving James, the youngest, to watch over the herd. Arriving in town, which is effectively run by the notorious Doc Holliday, the brothers find chaos, with the law and residents alike terrorized by gunplay, graft, and wanton recklessness. After quelling a drunken rampage, Earp is asked to replace the town's cowardly marshal. He refuses; but when the brothers return to camp to find their cattle rustled and young James dead, Earp immediately takes the job in order to seek revenge for his brother's murder.

In the scenes that follow, Earp and Holliday engage in a cautious dance of dominance and submission, negotiating authority over the town and each other. The two slowly develop a mutual respect that ultimately aligns them in the battle against the outlaw Clantons. When Holliday's jilted fiancée, Clementine Carter, arrives from Boston, however, relationships become more complicated. The arrival of a "lady"—a symbol of civilization—elicits an awkward attraction from Earp; jealousy from Holliday's girl, Chihuahua (Linda Darnell); and disdain from Holliday, whom Clementine has tracked from one dusty town to another across the vast western frontier. Holliday is not moved by her entreaties, any more than he is moved by Chihuahua's jealous clinging. Full of self-loathing for sins of the past, the escape offered by the bottle, or a stagecoach, seems to be all that is left for him. Earp and Clementine connect as awkwardly bonded kindred spirits—the hero and the lady—but by film's end, that, too, is not to be.

When Chihuahua provides Earp with evidence against his brother's murderer, the killing begins. One after another, the characters fall—Chihuahua, Billy Clanton, Virgil Earp—until Old Man Clanton challenges Marshal Earp to a showdown at the O.K. Corral, a gunslinging settling of scores between the two families—the Clantons representing the Old West, with its archaic, dispossessed men clinging doggedly to a ragged lawlessness, the Earps representing the New West, with its freshly fashioned, still suitably violent men of the law, who grudgingly embrace the justice and efficiency of civilization.

At sunrise, Earp, his brother Morgan, Doc Holliday, the mayor, and the deacon approach the corral for the final showdown. When the dust settles, Holliday is dead, as are all the Clanton boys. The film's oppositions have been resolved, and Earp has, in fact, transformed Tombstone from a lawless outpost to a civilized town. Rather than remain, Earp takes leave of Clementine and rides off, beginning the long journey to California where he will bury his brothers.

In *My Darling Clementine*, as in his other early westerns, Ford sought to capture the spirit of the Old West, often at the expense of historical authenticity. Forsaking fidelity to detail, his image of Tombstone is crafted to highlight the tension between the bold lawlessness of the frontier West and the ineffectual, but orderly East. This opposition is a mainstay of the classic westerns of the golden age (1930–1950), which emphasized the establishment of law and order, and presented essential and ritualistic conflicts between civilization and savagery, played out in narratives, symbolism, and characterizations. *My Darling Clementine* is no exception: Tortured by inner demons, Doc Holliday is unable to find his place in either the civilized world of the East or Tombstone's savage West; Chihuahua inhabits a world of sensuality and excess, but longs for Clementine's world of faithful innocence; the Clantons pay the ultimate price for their greed and wanton violence; and even Earp rides back into the wilderness, alone at film's end, his violent independence making him an unsuitable member of the civilized community he helped to create.

The film's use of gender archetypes in addressing these conflicts speaks directly to a postwar audience. When the film opens, Earp and his brothers are independent pioneers. He reluctantly becomes marshal only to enact frontier justice when the existing political structure proves unable to control the outpost or the murderous Clantons. With this shift, he assumes the role of warrior, creating a parallel to the real-life role that reinvigorated American masculinity during World War II.

Similarly, Earp's romantic interest, the lovely and refined Clementine, functions as the positive feminine pole in the narrative, creating, through her relationship with Earp, the promise of "harmonious community." Clementine's opposite, the mixed-blood prostitute Chihuahua, is the film's negative feminine pole. As the embodiment of a wild and savage West, she is symbolically aligned with its chaos and danger: an exotic object of fascination that will, in the end, lead to ruin. Indeed, the social constructs of the western demand that transgressive women such as Chihuahua either repent and be drawn back into the folds of the social fabric, or suffer the consequences of their transgressions.

While the resolution of these conflicts and oppositions is found, for most of the film's characters, in death, for Tombstone and the West, it results in new life. In one

of the film's most vibrant scenes, civilization stakes its claim: the town's new church is dedicated at a square dance social, where Earp, a symbol of both the Western frontier and postwar masculinity, and Clementine, a figure of Eastern civilization and domestication, join hands and celebrate a new era as the showdown between wilderness and progress comes to an end.

In 1991, *My Darling Clementine* was selected for preservation as part of the National Film Registry of the Library of Congress, an honor reserved for films deemed "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant." Although situated in the period commonly thought of as the golden age of the western, no western films released in 1946, including *My Darling Clementine*, received Academy Award nominations, despite critical praise for the film and its eventual status as an iconic entry in this American genre.

See also: Ford, John; Western, The

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—Cynthia J. Miller

MY MAN GODFREY. Gregory La Cava's *My Man Godfrey* (1936) embodied a new subgenre of comedy emerging from Hollywood in the Depression era—the screwball comedy. While offering audiences an escapist world of slapstick humor and sophisticated milieu, the film also attempted to level a scathing social critique against the widening gap between the haves and the have-nots. *My Man Godfrey* tells the story of a wealthy playboy who, disguised as a Depression victim, is hired by a scatterbrained socialite to serve as a butler for her family.

Screwball comedy employed several themes to intrigue audiences. One theme was reverse class snobbery—to be poor was to be better, to be rich was to be "out of touch." Another theme was a major inversion or subversion of the character's normality—the heiress forced to live poor, the pauper suddenly rich. Both premises mocked the phoniness of the wealthy and exalted proletarian values. *My Man Godfrey* sought to represent these themes.

The film opens against the backdrop of the Depression. Godfrey (William Powell), a poverty-stricken bum, is seen rummaging through a garbage dump. La Cava intentionally chose Powell, one of the most popular and refined male stars of the mid-1930s, to play against type, implying in the opening scene that even the debonair Powell could find himself destitute. No sooner is the contrast made than La Cava offers a sarcastic attack on Herbert Hoover. Godfrey places a pipe to his lips and remarks "Prosperity is just around the corner"—Hoover's 1931 statement that is still the subject of derision five years later.

Godfrey encounters Irene Bullock (Carole Lombard), a dizzy socialite in search of a genuine Depression victim (a “forgotten man”) as the goal of a society scavenger hunt. Irene is intrigued by Godfrey and brings him home to be the new family butler. It soon appears that the forgotten man is badly needed, as the film reveals the Bullock family to be silly and selfish, totally lacking common sense or the will to change for the better. Employing reverse class snobbery, Godfrey teaches the family the value of money, humility, and wisdom. The film cheats a little in its class radicalism when Godfrey is revealed to be a rebellious wealthy son, a far cry from the democratic impulse otherwise supported through Godfrey’s poverty.

My Man Godfrey, nevertheless, uplifted the poverty-stricken Depression-era audiences through a mockery of the upper classes. Despite their wealth and prestige, the beautiful people of New York’s high society can find no other meaningful activity than a scavenger hunt at the city dump. The madness of the rich, unfettered by normal conventions and unpaid bills, made for an escapist fantasy where the middle class could appreciate their “normal” lives. La Cava intentionally directed his satirical lens to the sheltered and oblivious lifestyle of these pampered folk. Irene personifies her class’s total lack of reality when she asks Godfrey why he lives in the dump when there are so many nicer homes in which to live. The wealthy had not fully comprehended the fact of the Depression and the abject plight of the masses. Only the level-headed forgotten man can bring society back to its original democratic ideals of equality and justice.

The narrative of the film set up an opportunity for the triumph of the common man. Godfrey, seemingly a humbly born butler, has more manners, intelligence, and courtesy than the nobly born Bullocks; far from being their inferior, he becomes their superior. Ironically, however, *My Man Godfrey* wound up placating upper-class sensitivities. By making Godfrey the Bullocks’ social equal, the film loses much of its satirical sting. Godfrey has the manners of a gentleman because he *is* a gentleman. It would not have been possible for a true forgotten man to exemplify such etiquette.

Through its juxtaposition of wealth and poverty, creating an entertaining spectacle for film audiences, *My Man Godfrey* typified films that emerged during the Depression era. While it ultimately failed in its attempt to critique the divisions of class and wealth, it is nevertheless notable as one of the first screwball comedies.

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—Anna Burke

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MOVIES IN AMERICAN HISTORY

AN ENCYCLOPEDIA
Volume 2

Philip C. DiMare, Editor



Santa Barbara, California • Denver, Colorado • Oxford, England

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NIXON. Oliver Stone has been one of the most controversial directors in Hollywood since the mid-1980s. Key to this controversy has been the director's claim to be doing history in films such as *Born on the Fourth of July* (1989), *JFK* (1991), and *The Doors* (1991). This claim has sparked widespread debate, increasing the director's and his work's exposure, and helping to increase his box-office revenues. One of Stone's most controversial films was *Nixon* (1995), his dramatization of the life and volatile career of one of America's most infamous political figures.

Nixon purports to be a psychological biography of the only man in history to resign the presidency of the United States. Beginning by examining his meager beginnings as the son of a failed lemon farmer father and a devout Quaker mother, Stone depicts Nixon's youth as sadly dysfunctional, and likely responsible for the many psychological foibles that eventually led to his political downfall. Stone goes on to reiterate a theory that had been suggested in a number of his other "historical" films: that during the 1960s, particularly after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, the government of the United States was taken over by unscrupulous, and dangerous, members of what Dwight Eisenhower called the "military-industrial complex." In *Nixon*, Stone goes so far as to imply that Nixon himself actually had knowledge of conspiratorial activities swirling around Kennedy's death, and that he may ultimately have benefited from these shadowy activities as he moved along his path toward the White House.

As with all of Stone's pictures that claim to be historically based, *Nixon* elicited comment from highly regarded historians such as Stephen Ambrose and Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. Ambrose, whose historical views tend toward the conservative, attacked Stone's work as a gross—even fraudulent—misrepresentation of the former president. Schlesinger, whose work represents the more progressive side of the historical debate, thought that the film, although certainly taking some dramatic license, was basically correct in its portrait of the tortured former president. For his part, Stone staunchly defended the accuracy of his film, pointing out that he had done extensive research, including interviewing many former Nixon staffers and listening to hours of previously unreleased Nixon White House recordings. Indeed, said Stone, beyond engaging in

hours of labor intensive research simply because he wanted to make *Nixon* a first-rate film, he also conducted this research because he knew that he would be subject to attacks from historians once the picture was released.

Nixon was such a complicated figure—odd looking, even he had to admit, and frequently off-putting—“When they look at you,” he says to a portrait of Kennedy in *Nixon*, “they see what they want to be; when they look at me, they see what they are”—it is difficult to know who could possibly be successful in playing him on-screen. Rip Torn tried it in the 1979 mini-series *Blind Ambition*, based on the John Dean book of the same name; and more recently, Frank Langella portrayed the post-White House Nixon in Ron Howard’s *Frost-Nixon* (2008). Interestingly, though, the lead role in *Nixon* did not go to an American-born actor but to the Welshman Anthony Hopkins. Transforming himself into a perverse caricature of Nixon—who at times during his political career almost seemed to be a caricature of himself—Hopkins earned one of his many Academy Award nominations for Best Actor. Hopkins portrays Nixon as a sympathetic character, deeply affected by the deaths of his two brothers when he was young, close to his Quaker mother, and often bound up by the almost oppressive strictures of his faith. Politically astute—he became one of the most sought-after advisors for Republican candidates late in his life—and disgustingly coarse in his personal relationships with his male companions, Nixon seemed almost painfully shy in public, especially given that he was a nationally recognized politician. Some of the most poignant moments in *Nixon* are shared between Nixon and his wife, Pat, played with élan by Best Supporting Actress nominee Joan Allen. Unsure of himself, even in this most intimate of relationships, Nixon seemed always haunted by his crippling insecurities. Indeed, the Stone/Hopkins Nixon is a profoundly private man who so desperately wanted to be loved that, ironically, he entered the most public of professions, politics. Ultimately, suggests Stone, it was Nixon’s insecurities that led to his downfall. Fearful of his enemies—both real and imagined—he made choices that today seem bizarrely self-destructive, especially in regard to Watergate.

Perhaps less accurate than his film portrayals of the Doors or Alexander the Great, and less compelling than his political thriller *JFK*, *Nixon* remains an important film, examining as it does the life and career of an important, tragically flawed, and often misunderstood leader in American history.

See also: JFK; Politics and Film; Stone, Oliver

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—Richard A. Hall

NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN. In the stories of the ancient Greeks, tragedy was marked by the unfolding of fate, brought down on the protagonist because of one tragic flaw, the mortal weakness within the hero that allowed the gods to have their way with him. Sometimes the gods acted directly. At other times the Furies would be unleashed to wreak their terrible and implacable vengeance. Set against a hardscrabble landscape, and richly cruel in its depiction of fate, the harsh tragedy of the 2007 film, *No Country for Old Men*, is like one of those ancient tales brought to life in the American Southwest. As in ancient tragedy, the hero brings his fate on himself, in this case by performing an act of mercy, and as in Greek tragedy his fate is personified by a frighteningly unstoppable personal Fury.

Directed by Ethan and Joel Coen, and based on a 2005 novel of the same name by Cormac McCarthy, *No Country for Old Men* won four Oscars including Best Picture, an unusual award for a film in which nearly all the characters with whom one would ordinarily identify are killed. But even the best of the characters in this film come across as hard-edged, existing in a West Texas desert landscape, a trailer park of the soul.

Llewelyn Moss, played by Josh Brolin, is out hunting on foot when he comes across deserted vehicles, bodies, bags of drugs, and a case containing a great deal of money. The only survivor is inarticulate with pain and dehydration, and can only beg Moss for a drink of water. Moss has no water, and he pragmatically leaves the wounded man at the scene while taking the bag with the money for his own. In the harsh rules of this dog-eat-dog land, Moss has done well for himself. He has left little trace of himself at the scene and has come away with a life-changing amount of money. Nevertheless, his survivor sensibilities are overcome by pity, and Moss drives into the desert to bring water to the wounded man, only to find him dead. No good deed goes unpunished, and it is this foolhardy act of kindness that sets the hunters on his trail.

The primary and ultimately successful hunter is one of the most frightening villains in film, a smoothly coiffed hitman named Anton Chigurh, played by Javier Bardem. Chigurh is inscrutable, unstoppable, unemotional and reasonable, as only a madman can be. If he were merely venial and greedy as so many movie villains are made out to be, he would be much less chilling. It is his deranged but logical personal ethic that drives him ruthlessly forward. His twisted sense of justice leads him to kill not only Moss, but anyone who interferes with his prey. He even goes out of his way to kill Moss's wife, not as revenge but as a kind of insane justice. If given a chance to speak before they are killed, his victims try to convince the killer that he doesn't "have to do this," that the future is not fixed, that events are not inevitable. But Chigurh must kill. As the inexorable hand of fate, his actions are fixed, a theme underscored by Chigurh's habit of tossing a coin, heads or tails, to offer his victims the hope of a 50-50 chance at mercy.

Meanwhile, circling the edge of this vortex of violence and inescapable fate is the enigmatic character of Sheriff Bell, played by veteran actor Tommy Lee Jones. The sheriff serves as witness and storyteller, narrator and commentator. Like the ancient Greek bard Homer, who set his tales of fate and the cruel and inexplicable will of the gods in a mythic era, the sheriff narrates these events as a tragic and completed past. The film is bracketed by his reminiscences, buttressing the inevitability of the

characters' actions and reactions with the immutability of the perfected past tense. Like a solo version of the ancient Greek theatrical device, the chorus, Sheriff Bell's comments provide distance, context, and monumentality. Through the soft Texas drawl of his words, the story is framed as an epic tragedy, beyond the law of man even as represented by the office he holds and the badge he wears. And yet, in the country that is no place for the old, it is the voice of Sheriff Bell, the old man, that survives to tell the tale.

See also: Coen Brothers, *The*

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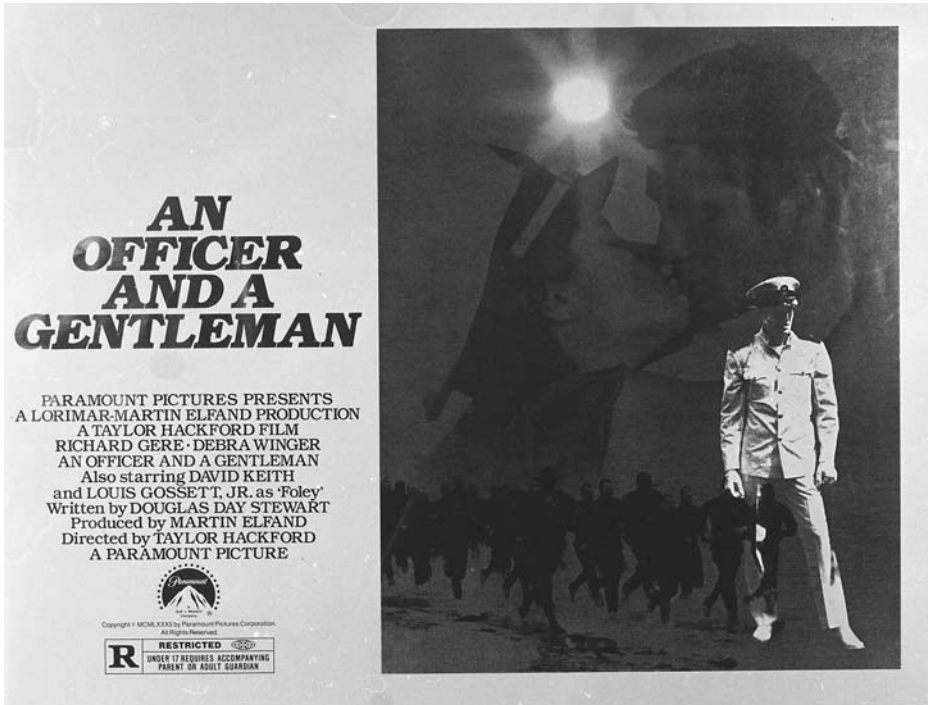
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—Helen M. York

OFFICER AND A GENTLEMAN, AN. Written by Douglas Day Stewart and nominated for an Academy Award, *An Officer and a Gentleman* grossed nearly \$130 million after its 1982 release. Directed by Taylor Hackford and distributed by Paramount Pictures, the film stars Richard Gere, Louis Gossett Jr., and Debra Winger. An engaging, military love story, *An Officer and a Gentleman* is a tale of immutable challenges, acquired valor, self-actualization, and sensitivity.

Basically a traditional coming-of-age story set in the context of a war film, the picture's narrative unfolds on several complex levels. A Naval Aviation Officer candidate, Zack Mayo (Gere), is a talented college graduate, though a socially maladjusted young man. The son of an enlisted Navy man, who must endure his mother's suicide and the failed parenting of his alcoholic and womanizing father, Zack has grown into a displaced loner, searching for a purpose in life. His quest takes him to a 13-week Aviation Officer Candidate School program, during which he will be trained, and parented, by Marine Corps Gunnery Sergeant Emil Foley (Gossett). There is a love interest, a woman, blue-collar factory worker Paula Pokrifki (Winger). Paula is young and ethical, and clearly relegated to the social and economic fringes of American culture, with little hope of self-empowerment. She and her good friend Lynette Pomeroy (Lisa Blount) remain optimistic that they will find husbands from among the candidates training in their hometown, young men who will take them away from the debilitating drudgery of their community.

In his typical fashion, Zack attempts to use his superior intellect, physical skills, and charm to make his way through the program with as little effort as possible. He cons his classmates and uses Paula: "I've loved you since I met you," says Paula. "I don't want you to love me. I don't want anyone to love me," responds Zack. He even tries to fool Sergeant Foley: "In every class," says Foley, "there's always one joker who thinks that he's smarter than me. In this class, that happens to be you. Isn't it, Mayonnaise?" Realizing his tremendous potential, however, Foley rides Zack to the breaking point. In one of the film's most poignant scenes, with Foley trying to force Mayo to quit, Zack begs Foley, through tears of anguish and despair, not to kick him out of the program:



Movie poster for the film *An Officer and a Gentleman* featuring actors Richard Gere and Debra Winger, 1982. (Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

“DON’T YOU DO IT! DON’T! YOU . . . I got nowhere else to go, I got nowhere else to go . . . I got nothing else.”

Allowed to stay in the program, Zack becomes the leader, and the friend that the other candidates, and Paula, desperately need. Maintaining a thematic balance among romance, action, and drama, the film winds toward a rather predictable conclusion: Officer Zack Mayo, resplendent in naval whites, and having come to understand loyalty, heroism, and self, strides into the local factory, sweeps Paula up in his arms, and carries her off to the cheers of those who must remain behind.

The film fits neatly within the cultural, political, and economic context of Reagan-era America. Suffering through the ignominy of a humiliating defeat in Vietnam, the Watergate scandal and failed presidency of Richard Nixon, and the “malaise” of the Carter administration, Americans were in the mood for redemptive narratives, especially those that were framed by a thematic of military heroism. Expressing the possibility that the hopes and dreams of those who had been relegated to the margins of American society could indeed be realized, the film was an overwhelming success, cashing in at the box office and garnering a Best Actress nomination for Winger and Oscars for Best Supporting Actor for Gossett and Best Song for “Up Where We Belong.”

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—Gloria Sawyer

ON THE WATERFRONT. Hollywood and organized labor were both among the earliest targets of the Cold War's witch hunts for communist subversion. It is not surprising, then, that the 1954 working-class drama *On the Waterfront* did not depict a strike or other solidarity movement, and instead celebrated apolitical individualism while condemning union corruption. Based in part on a series of prizewinning newspaper articles about New Jersey longshoremen's unions, *On the Waterfront* relocates the action to Brooklyn. The narrative revolves around the question of whether dockworker Terry Malloy (Marlon Brando) will testify against labor bosses after he witnesses the murder of another worker who had provided information about union racketeering to the Waterfront Crime Commission. Directed by former Communist Party member Elia Kazan, who in 1952 angered many when he revealed the names of former communist associates to the House Un-American Activities Committee, *On the Waterfront* raised questions about the filmmaker's motives; some argued that Kazan made the movie to justify his own willingness to name names. In any case, audiences and critics applauded, and *On the Waterfront* became American cinema's most decorated labor film, winning eight Academy Awards in 1955, including Oscars for best picture, director, screenplay, actor (Brando), and supporting actress (Eva Marie Saint).

Although *On the Waterfront* stands as a representative product of Cold War Hollywood, the film has endured largely because of its ability to both draw on and transcend conventions of mid-1950s popular culture. Enlivened by a sophisticated Leonard Bernstein soundtrack, the movie successfully combines elements of film noir, contemporary urban television shows, and live theater. Kazan and screenwriter Budd Schulberg have said that they wanted to make an "eastern"—a film featuring themes common to westerns but set on the East Coast. Indeed, in many ways the picture recalls *High Noon* (1952), also the story of a principled man taking action while others do nothing, and a film that was interpreted by many as an allegory about public submissiveness during the Cold War.

On the Waterfront may indeed function as a New York western; however, the film's protagonist exhibits something more complicated than the rugged individualism of the typical western hero. Brando's much-celebrated rendering of the hard-edged and sensitive sides of ex-boxer Terry Malloy represents a landmark among Hollywood's portrayals of American masculinity. In the film's iconic scene, Malloy rides in a taxi with his brother Charley, a union insider assigned to convince him not to testify or, if unsuccessful in that effort, to kill him. Terry disarms Charley by reminding him that years ago, determined to win a lucrative bet, he asked Terry to deliberately lose a fight and thus ruin his boxing career. "You don't understand," he says, "I coulda had class, I coulda been a contender, I coulda been somebody. . . ." While that is the most

oft-quoted moment, Brando's performance flourishes over the course of the several scenes depicting Terry's courtship with Edie (Saint), the sister of the murdered worker. Edie has no reason to trust Terry but nevertheless seems drawn to him. Connecting viscerally in the silences of their awkward conversations, their love is based on pure intuition, the same kind of animal instinct that compels Edie's love for her cat and inspires Terry to care for a flock of pigeons on an apartment rooftop. So there is solidarity in *On the Waterfront* after all, but a kind not based on any ideology nor impelled by struggles for group rights.

On the Waterfront was as much a postwar film as it was a Cold War production, for it reflected anxieties about rapid modernization and urbanization. It appealed to yearnings for a society based on instinctual moral decisions rather than the wheelings and dealings of labor bosses, corporations, and city bureaucracies. Still, the film remains a cultural artifact of American Cold War liberalism: Poor working conditions are blamed not on employers but on corrupt unions, the film celebrates the power of individuals who counter groupthink, and in the climactic scene the workers' triumph is that they no longer have to bribe union officials to be able to answer the shipping company magnate's call, "Let's go to work!"

See also: Brando, Marlon; Hollywood Blacklist, The; HUAC Hearings, The; Kazan, Elia

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—Kenneth F. Maffitt

ORDINARY PEOPLE. Opening his 1980 film *Ordinary People* with a series of dazzling dissolves reminiscent of those used by Orson Welles to guide us into the mysterious realm of Xanadu in *Citizen Kane*, first-time director Robert Redford draws us seductively into a pristine upper-class world of manicured lawns and perfectly appointed Colonial homes. Redford lingers over these shots, as if to make us envious of this wonderfully safe and secure space, one that seems so different from those that most of us inhabit simply because it is anything but ordinary. There are secrets to be revealed, though, about the perfect families that populate this world and that initially appear all but immune to the dross and strain of everyday life.

The film centers on the three remaining members of an emotionally tortured family trying to deal with the death of a son and a brother. Conrad (Timothy Hutton), or sometimes Connie or Con, as his father and best friends call him, struggles to reconcile the loss of his older, heroic brother, Buck (Scott Doebler), who died tragically in a boating

accident. Anxious, unable to concentrate, distraught—we learn that Connie tried to kill himself and spent months in a psychiatric hospital after his brother's death—Conrad is gently prodded by his well-meaning father, Calvin (the superb Donald Sutherland), to keep their agreement and to visit the psychologist who has been recommended to the family. Connie reluctantly agrees to go, and so begins his relationship with Dr. Berger (Judd Hirsch), who will slowly, sometimes painfully draw out Conrad's story.

Although he loves her dearly and desperately seeks her approval, Conrad's relationship with his mother, Beth (Mary Tyler Moore playing as far against type as one can imagine), is distant, at best. Haunted by memories of her golden boy Buck, Beth seems incapable of feeling anything for anyone else in her life. Seeking merely to exist, she orders every minute detail of her life—her house, her clothes, her appearance, the lives of her husband and son, indeed of her sons, as Buck's room remains just as it was before he died, a shrine to the extraordinarily gifted athlete, student, friend that he was. Conrad tries everything he knows to break through the barriers that his mother has erected, but there is no way in for him. It is as if Beth believed that she and her family, and especially Buck, were somehow not "ordinary people," that the unique qualities they possessed, and that had allowed them to rise above so many others, would forever keep the world at bay. Beth knows different now, though; for, since she lost her son, she understands the fragility of human existence—"Ward," she cries hysterically to her brother, "you tell me the meaning of happy. But first you better make sure your kids are good and safe, that they haven't fallen off a horse, been hit by a car, or drown in that pool you're so proud of."

The problem, of course, is that Beth and her family, despite what they have accomplished, *are*, in fact, ordinary people; and just like the rest of us, they must deal with what life gives us over to—heartache, sickness, death. Beth, finally, cannot cope with what has come her way. As her husband says to her: "You're determined Beth; but you know something? You're not strong. . . . We would have been all right if there hadn't been any mess. But you can't handle mess. You need everything neat and easy. I don't know. Maybe you can't love anyone."

Because his father is right, because his mother cannot love him, and especially because she is not strong but merely determined, Connie turns to two other figures in his life for support: his doctor and a budding love interest, Jeannine Pratt (Elizabeth McGovern). Dr. Berger, an avuncular, terribly gifted analyst, is able to bring Connie to the point where he comes to realize, to his great surprise, that he is still alive and his brother dead because Buck—much like their mother, it seems—was just not strong enough: "It hurts to be mad at him, doesn't it?," asks Dr. Berger. "God I loved him. It's not fair. You just do one thing wrong," says Connie. "And what was the one wrong thing that you did?" "I hung on. I stayed with the boat."

While his relationship with Dr. Berger gives Connie what he needs to survive, his relationship with Jeannine gives him what he desires. Lovely, talented, and self-possessed enough to be self-deprecating, Jeannine seems hopelessly out of Connie's league—and yet, she is drawn to him because of all the things that make him so wonderfully special in his ordinary way. Unlike glorious, tragic Buck, Connie represents the best of us.

See also: Melodrama, The

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—*Philip C. DiMare*

PAPER CHASE, THE. Based on the 1970 novel by John J. Osborn Jr., *The Paper Chase* tells the story of Harvard Law student James T. Hart (Timothy Bottoms), who struggles to perform while maintaining his integrity in the face of withering attacks by a storied professor. An insider look into the lives of Ivy League law students during the 1970s, *The Paper Chase* received three Academy Award nominations, with the brilliant John Houseman winning the Oscar for his supporting role as Professor Charles W. Kingsfield.

The film opens with first-year students filing into their first session of Kingsfield's course on contract law. Setting the scene for what is to come, Kingsfield calls on Hart, requesting that he recite the facts of a particular case. When Hart reveals that he has not read the assignment, Kingsfield reprimands him for his lack of preparedness. Recognizing the amount of pressure he and his classmates are under, and seeking to ensure that he is never again unprepared, Hart locks himself in his dorm room and studies for hours on end. Based on terrifying stories he has heard about Kingsfield from third- and fourth-year students, Hart comes to idolize, and fear, this intimidating mentor. Realizing that they can never cover every element of the law themselves, the students divide up into study groups, each member agreeing to outline the material for one legal area. Hart's group is comprised of Ford (Graham Beckel), Brooks (James Naughton), Anderson (Edward Herrmann), Bell (Craig Nelson), and O'Connor (Robert Lydiard). Methodical in producing his outlines, Hart nevertheless takes time to relax, swimming in the university pool and sometimes breaking into campus buildings.

As he moves through the term, Hart's reverence for Kingsfield turns into an obsession to impress this mentor. In preparation for spring exams, Hart breaks into a restricted area of the library and steals Kingsfield's legendary notes on contract law, notes that the professor had created when he was a Harvard law student. By the end of the school year, overwhelmed by the pressures of a law program, several members of Hart's study group have either dropped out of the group or out of Harvard altogether; Brooks even attempts suicide. Disgusted at what he has become, Hart begins to wonder if a law degree is worth the grueling effort required of those who pursue it.

Though on one level he has come to despise him, however, Hart is still inspired by his teacher. Initially thrilled when Kingsfield takes him on as a student researcher, Hart drives himself to the breaking point in order to complete his assignment. Having stayed up for five straight days, but not quite finished with the task, Hart approaches Kingsfield and shamefacedly asks the professor for more time. Kingsfield dismisses him, informing him that the assignment has now been given to a third-year student and that Hart's contribution is no longer needed.

Stunned and embarrassed, Hart does what he has promised himself he would never do again: he attends class unprepared. After being called on by Kingsfield, he is publicly humiliated. Given a dime by Kingsfield, Hart is instructed to call his parents and to inform them that he will be dropping out of law school. Exiting the lecture hall, Hart pauses, turns to the professor, and yells out: "You are a son of a bitch, Kingsfield." "Mr. Hart," Kingsfield calmly replies, "that is the most intelligent thing you've said today. You may take your seat." After final exams, which he aces, an exhausted Hart goes to Cape Cod to relax. Having been forwarded his grades in the mail, Hart hesitates before opening the envelop that will reveal his future. Leaving the envelop sealed, he swiftly folds it into an airplane and sends it sailing into the sea.

Although no longer in vogue, Kingsfield's intimidating style was practiced by some professors in 1970s law schools. Thought by some the only way to teach lawyers to stand up under fire, legal historians point out that Kingsfield's tactics were nonetheless rare in real law schools (Koch, 1983). Although popular, some critics felt that *The Paper Chase* could have done more to portray the legal profession more positively. Hart, they point out, unlike some of his classmates, seemed interested in the law only because of his obsession with Kingsfield (Kael, 1973).

See also: Melodrama, The

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—Jennifer K. Morrison

PASSION OF THE CHRIST, THE. Released in 2004, actor/director Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* became the most successful, and the most controversial, religious film in the history of American cinema. Gibson produced *The Passion* through Icon, his own production company, using \$25 million of his own money. Acted entirely in Latin and Aramaic with subtitles, and containing extremely graphic and bloody violence, the film seemed an unlikely hit. Nevertheless, *The Passion of the Christ* has become the highest-grossing R-rated film of all time and challenged Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* for the top-grossing film of 2004.



Scene from the controversial 2004 film *The Passion of the Christ*, starring James Caviezel. Directed by Mel Gibson. (Photofest)

The film revolves around the last few hours of the life of Jesus (James Caviezel) in which he is arrested, beaten, scourged, mocked, and finally crucified. Gibson leaves little to the imagination in his portrayal of Jesus's torture and death. There are few references in the film to other aspects of the life of Jesus beyond his crucifixion. Tightly edited flashbacks (most under a minute) give the viewer brief moments of respite from the violence.

The *Passion of the Christ* became for some a deeply religious experience, while others found it theologically, historically, and even morally problematic. The themes, implicit and explicit, of the film ensured that it would be at the center of a cultural and religious firestorm. Numerous religious leaders from both the Jewish and Christian community claimed that the film drew on the centuries-old anti-Semitic tradition of the Passion Play. Staged as part of European liturgical traditions since the late Middle Ages and into modern times, the Passion Play typically portrayed the crucifixion of Christ as the responsibility of "evil Jews." These public spectacles, often performed on Good Friday, frequently led to outbreaks of violence against Jewish communities. Many critics believed Gibson's film drew too freely on this tradition.

Some Christian critics have also suggested that the film's emphasis on the violence of the crucifixion obscured the life and ethical teachings of Jesus. Noted biblical scholar John Dominic Crossan referred to it as "a hymn to a savage God," a celebration of violence for its own sake. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops reissued a 1988 document in which they had urged that any portrayal of the crucifixion of Jesus must, as a matter of conscience, ensure that no imagery or symbolism used could have anti-Semitic overtones, even if that imagery came from the Gospels themselves.

Gibson, a traditionalist Catholic who rejects all of the changes that have come to the Church since the second Vatican Council in the 1960s, argued that the film simply portrayed the final hours of Jesus's life based on the Gospels and, he finally admitted, on the mystical visions of a nineteenth-century nun named Catherine Emerich. In an unlikely cultural alliance, many Protestant evangelical Christians joined Gibson in defending the film. They also rejected the idea that the film contained anti-Semitic imagery and symbolism and viewed attacks on it as part of a generalized secular assault on Christianity in America. Evangelical leaders have been the film's staunchest supporters, and are often fulsome in their praise of its alleged historical accuracy and fidelity to the Gospel accounts.

Critics have admitted that *The Passion* shows flashes of technical excellence while generally decrying the film on other grounds. Some have connected its appeal to the shock cinema of Quentin Tarantino and Gasper Noé. Historian of the American "Jesus film" W. Barnes Tatum praised Gibson's artistic vision while concluding that it was "theologically problematic, historically unlikely and literally uncritical" (Tatum, 2004).

Controversy over the film briefly reignited in the summer of 2006 when Mel Gibson was stopped for speeding in Malibu Beach, California. A drunken Gibson unleashed a tirade at the arresting officers, hurling anti-Semitic epitaphs and claiming that Jews were responsible "for all the wars in the world." He subsequently made a public apology for his statements.

See also: Gibson, Mel; Religion and Nationalism in Film

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—W. Scott Poole

PHILADELPHIA. TriStar Pictures and Clinica Estetico released *Philadelphia* on December 23, 1993. Marketed as the first mainstream Hollywood film to deal with AIDS and homosexuality (Connant, 76), *Philadelphia* is a statement about the necessity for social tolerance. It is clear from the film's opening title sequence, a visual exploration of urban Philadelphia accompanied by Bruce Springsteen's somber "Streets of Philadelphia," that the movie is entering into a cinematic discussion of American social ills. *Philadelphia* made AIDS and homosexuality legitimate areas of exploration in the entertainment industry. When *Philadelphia* was released, the medical world, and to a



Scene from the 1993 film *Philadelphia*, starring Tom Hanks (left) and Denzel Washington. Directed by Jonathan Demme. (Photofest)

degree the larger American public, were aware that HIV and AIDS impacted a much larger demographic than the gay community. However, popular culture still associated AIDS primarily with male homosexuality. Significantly, although providing a sympathetic image of those suffering from the disease and opening up a profoundly important social dialogue, *Philadelphia* also reinforced the notion that AIDS was synonymous with male homosexuality and deviant sexual behavior.

Produced and directed by Jonathan Demme (*Silence of the Lambs*) and starring audience-friendly actors Tom Hanks (*Big*) and Denzel Washington (*Glory*), *Philadelphia* is a courtroom drama that tells the story of Ivy League corporate attorney Andrew Beckett (Hanks). Several minutes into the film Beckett is seen in a fraternal environment, smoking cigars, having cocktails, and exchanging workplace jabs with the senior partners at his prestigious Philadelphia law firm. Here, Beckett is dubbed the “golden boy” and informed that he will be the firm’s next partner. Shortly after this promotion, the film audience discovers that Beckett has AIDS and is gay; his co-workers only begin to suspect the truth. After working tirelessly on an important brief, Beckett is framed to look incompetent and then fired. Convinced that this abrupt turn of events was an instance of workplace discrimination, Beckett decides to sue his former employer. Unable to find anyone to take his case, Beckett approaches ambulance-chasing attorney Joe Miller (Washington). Initially reluctant to take the case, Miller finally agrees to

represent Beckett, bringing cinematic life to the tagline on the movie's one-sheet "No one would take his case . . . until one man was willing to take on the system." In a dramatic courtroom speech, Miller looks directly into the camera and condemns not only the wrongdoings of Beckett's former law firm but also society's fears of AIDS and homosexuality.

Originally named Gay Related Immune Deficiency Syndrome (GRIDS), AIDS was both medically and socially linked with the male homosexual community, at least in the United States. Americans, however, ultimately came to realize that the disease was not exclusive to the gay community, and thus became somewhat more sympathetic to those who contracted it. The highly publicized story of Ryan White captured the hearts of Americans, for instance. Interestingly, though, White was a young boy who acquired the disease through a blood transfusion, and because of this, his story was seen as a socially acceptable anomaly. Images of male homosexuals as sexually deviant remained ubiquitous in the pop culture media. Indeed, Jonathan Demme himself had been criticized for his portrayal of homosexuality in his film *Silence of the Lambs* (1991), in which Jame Gumb (Ted Levine), a psychotic killer, is, among other things, seen cross-dressing in a women's suit made from the skins of his female victims. Given this, some critics felt that *Philadelphia* was simply Demme's way of apologizing for the way he portrayed deviant sexuality in *Silence of the Lambs*. Although the director maintained that Gumb was not supposed to be viewed as being gay, he did admit that audiences could have perceived the character in that way (Green, 1994, 58). Although the portrayal of homosexuality is quite different in *Silence of the Lambs* and *Philadelphia*, the latter film does reinforce the connection between AIDS and male homosexuality. In *Philadelphia*, it is made clear that Beckett contracted HIV/AIDS during a random sexual encounter in a gay porn theater, clearly linking the disease with male homosexuality, sexually deviant behavior, and promiscuity.

For all its controversy, however, *Philadelphia* did usher in an era when television shows and films dealing with homosexuality became more commonplace. The fact that Beckett was played by a nonhomosexual also reinvigorated a conversation about gay and lesbian actors in Hollywood. Hanks won an Oscar for his performance, making the film a significant turning point for his career, as well. After this film, Hanks became a serious A-list actor and Hollywood heavyweight. *Philadelphia*, although on a certain level dangerously stereotypical, was nonetheless a compassionate film that changed both the trajectory of Hanks's career and the discussion of sexuality in American society.

See also: Washington, Denzel

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—Laurie Chin Sayres

PHILADELPHIA STORY, THE. *The Philadelphia Story* premiered in December 1940. It was the fifth collaboration of director George Cukor and star Katharine Hepburn. The film marked Hepburn's return to Hollywood, and initiated the second wave of her career. In 1938, after the box-office failures of two films now considered classics, *Bringing Up Baby* (1938) and *Holiday* (1938), she was labeled "box-office poison" by exhibitors and driven out of Hollywood to Broadway where playwright Philip Barry (who also wrote *Holiday*) wrote *The Philadelphia Story* specifically for Hepburn. It addressed precisely those derided qualities that had become a part of her star persona: articulateness, arrogance, and an upper-class sensibility. The men in the narrative repeatedly accuse Tracy Lord (Hepburn) of arrogance, a theme especially pronounced in a harsh diatribe from her father, whom Tracy chastises for adultery. He, in turn, berates her for maintaining impossibly high standards for herself and others (even blaming her inability to be a "sympathetic daughter" for his infidelity). Tracy's flaw is, essentially, not having any flaws, at least in her own mind; thus, she must learn to "have some regard for human frailty." As viewers, we see her suffer this series of condemnations until, by the end, she feels enough like an imperfect human to declare—as she gets married—"You know how I feel? Like a human, like a human being!" Presumably, audiences transferred Tracy's lessons onto Hepburn, who won widespread critical praise and public acceptance for her performance, paving the way for a series of excellent leading roles in romantic comedies with Spencer Tracy, beginning with her next film, *Woman of the Year* (1942).

The narrative of *The Philadelphia Story* begins days before Tracy's second wedding to George (John Howard), a middle-class employee of her father's company. She divorced, we soon learn, charming, old-moneyed, C. K. Dexter Haven (Cary Grant) two years before. The Lords are a nationally known family living in Philadelphia's affluent "Main Line" suburb. Unbeknownst to Tracy (who prizes her privacy), Dexter has struck a deal with tabloid *Spy* magazine to sneak in a reporter, Macauley "Mike" Conner (James Stewart), and photographer, Elizabeth Imbrie (Ruth Hussey), to her impending nuptials. Tracy immediately catches on, but is unable to evict the guests after learning that Dexter's motives were pure: in exchange for the story, *Spy* has agreed not to print a dirty piece on Tracy's father's affair with a dancer.

Tracy and Mike become infatuated with each other, each discovering that his or her class prejudices may be unfounded. A love square thus emerges among Tracy, Mike, George, and Dexter—who is masterminding the narrative's events in an effort to win Tracy back. In this way, the film confronts class politics explicitly by mapping class onto the romantic leads. Most visibly, Mike must learn that "even if a fellow is born into the pink, he can be a pretty nice guy." Tracy, who early on espouses a liberal attitude toward class difference, is forced to see that George is more interested in using her to climb the social ladder than he is in loving her. At the end of the film, the class order is reestablished: Tracy and Dexter remarry and Mike and Elizabeth are together. Only George is shut out of a romantically happy ending, shunned by both upper and lower classes. It is up to interpretation whether the film is conservative in this respect or whether it offers a bitter take on an immobile system.

James Stewart won his only Academy Award as Best Actor for his performance. Donald Ogden Stewart also won an Academy Award for Best Screenplay. The film was nominated for Best Picture, Hepburn and Hussey were nominated for their performances, and Cukor was nominated for his direction. *The Philadelphia Story* was recently ranked number 44 on the American Film Institute's 100 Greatest Movies list, and as the fifth Best Romantic Comedy in American Cinema. In Stanley Cavell's influential book *Pursuits of Happiness: The Hollywood Comedy of Remarriage*, *The Philadelphia Story* is awarded a prominent place in American cinematic history as a key member of the "comedy of remarriage," which Cavell argues is an influential, and distinctively American, film genre.

See also: Cukor, George; Grant, Cary; Hepburn, Katharine; Romantic Comedy, The

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—Kyle Stevens

PIANO, THE. *The Piano* (1993) is an important film for the global recognition of Australasian cinema, women filmmakers, and its American distributor Miramax. The film's story focuses on a mute, mail-order bride, Ada McGrath (Holly Hunter), who travels from Scotland to New Zealand during the 1850s to marry a colonist, Alisdair Stewart (Sam Neill). Ada primarily expresses herself through playing her piano, an instrument that is sold by her new husband to a subordinate, George Baines (Harvey Keitel), who offers it back to Ada, key by key, in exchange for escalating physical intimacies with her. Inspired by the subversive work of the Brontës and Emily Dickinson, director Jane Campion ostensibly wished to create a newly wish-fulfilling, female-focused cinematic fantasy, one in which the heroine escapes Victorian constraints to finally express shameless sexuality with a man who physically liberates her (initially against her will).

The Piano emphasizes Ada's threatened position as a pale-faced foreigner in an unfathomable land, sidelining its broader colonial context *and* postcolonial awareness (most troublingly, Maoris are portrayed as comic caricatures of "natives"). New Zealand is viewed through breathtaking crane shots and pans that showcase the diversity of its landscape as from a tourist's photographic perspective, in parallel to Ada's outsider status. Though the film's resonance in terms of New Zealand culture is widely acknowledged, it ironically delocalizes itself by literally combining scenes filmed in the North and South Island. In parallel to this, American critics have focused on the transnational significance of the film in feminist and psychoanalytic terms. Psychoanalytic readings of the film emphasize its use of Gothic elements, its portrayal of repression

and desire, and the Oedipal trajectory of its narrative when Ada's daughter Flora (Anna Paquin) rebels against maternal separation. More pervasive, feminist readings of the film dwell on how to view the "bargaining" between Ada and Baines—as enabling the liberation of female desire or, most troublingly, as romanticized prostitution—and how to understand Ada's automutism—as symbolic of female oppression or as ironic self-empowerment through rejection of patriarchal language.

The film's reception raises troubling questions about what it means when a mute heroine is almost unanimously celebrated for representing female empowerment: reviewers repeatedly emphasized Hunter's new beauty *in silence*, praising the "eloquence" of her almost speechless performance. Ironically, Ada's muteness is belied by Michael Nyman's anachronistic soundtrack which, in its modern romanticism, communicates her capacity for emotionally full expression outside time or place. This emphasis is what made *The Piano* such a success for its independent American distributor Miramax, despite its "foreignness." *The Piano* was also the first film by a woman director to win the Palme d'Or at Cannes, a fact much publicized by Miramax, reflecting that company's promotional approach to foregrounding international awards. Miramax aggressively marketed *The Piano* for Academy Awards: that it was nominated for eight Oscars and won three bolstered Miramax's globalizing approach to the promotion of "art-house" cinema during the 1990s. It also increased recognition of women filmmakers by involving a relatively high number of women in fundamental roles: director and screenwriter (Campion), producer (Jan Chapman), editor (Veronika Jenet), and costume designer (Janet Patterson).

The film is also important in relation to Campion's other films, each of which focuses on psychological tensions within female characters. Its complex sexual politics especially resonate with Campion's subsequent adaptation of Henry James (*The Portrait of a Lady*, 1996) and her most recent feature film, a female-focused neo-noir (*In the Cut*, 2003).

In terms of genre, *The Piano* has itself been classified as a contemporary women's film, a period film, a gothic melodrama, and a revisionist historical text. It also resonates with the western because, like that genre, *The Piano* has been repeatedly analyzed in terms of ideologically-loaded frontier mythology, national formation, and cultural definition. Early shots of Ada's prestigious Broadwood piano, transported with her from the Old World (Scotland) and precariously placed over oncoming, "savage" waves in the new frontier context, suggest the fragility of "civilization": a visual message that parallels how the isolated houses of the American frontier are shot in numerous westerns. That parallel aside, where women are typically marginalized in westerns, *The Piano* foregrounds the destructiveness of female subjugation (and/or sexuality) in a different historical context of colonial settlement.

See also: Campion, Jane; Women in Film

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—*Elsie Walker*

PILLOW TALK. *Pillow Talk*, released in 1959, was the first of three movies that Doris Day and Rock Hudson would make together. The other two were *Lover Come Back* (1961) and *Send Me No Flowers* (1964). These three films ushered in a new type of film genre: labeled "no sex sex comedies" or "naughty but nice bedroom comedies," they were long on sexual innuendo—"Pillow Talk," the trailer announced, is "*what goes on* when the lights go off"—but short on sex. As with other films that bumped up against the forbidden topic of sexuality, *Pillow Talk* was still subject to the guidelines laid down by the Hays Code, a set of regulations that had been used to control the content of films for over three decades. The film represented a significant shift in focus for both lead actors. Doris Day, who seemed to embody the idea of the virtuous mother or wife and had consistently been chosen for such roles, was now cast as Jan Morrow, a single, sophisticated, and successful professional. Although Jan was still searching for Mr. Right, she was no longer depicted as merely an asexual homemaker. The film revived Day's career and made her into Hollywood's biggest female box-office draw over the next six years. It also brought the actress her only Academy Award nomination. Hudson's departure from his normal dramatic roles was even more striking, as he was now cast as the romantic lead, Brad Allen, a flourishing songwriter and incorrigible playboy. As a result of the film's success, Hudson began to be offered more and more roles as the leading man in romantic comedies.

In the film, Jan and Brad share what once was called a "party line," where two or more telephone subscribers have to share the same phone line. Jan becomes angry when Brad is constantly on the phone breezily wooing an assortment of women, which makes it all but impossible for Jan to make or receive business calls. Brad eventually finds out who Jan is, adopts a Texas accent, and uses their party line to charm her until she falls in love with him. She later discovers who he really is and walks out on him. Realizing that he has fallen in love with her, Brad begs Jan's forgiveness, but to no avail. Desperately trying to win her back, he hires Jan to redecorate his apartment, telling her that he wants to be rid of everything that smacks of his old life as a playboy. Still hurt that Brad had tricked her, Jan turns the tables on him, making over his apartment into something resembling a Turkish brothel. Angrily confronting her about what she has done, Brad finally carries Jan back to his apartment, where all is made right when he declares his love for her and promises to remain faithful forever.

The telephone plays a critical role in *Pillow Talk*. Because of the auditory, nonvisual relationship between Jan and Brad, they talk without seeing each other—although the audience sees both simultaneously thanks to split-screen photography. When Brad does finally get a look at Jan, he begins to play two roles—his playboy self, in their innuendo-filled party-line conversations, and the honest, hardworking oil tycoon who is every bit the perfect gentleman. This was not the first time that telephones played an important role in films. *Sorry, Wrong Number* used the telephone to create

suspense and terror; and in *It's a Wonderful Life*, a telephone call to Donna Reed transforms James Stewart into a jealous lover. But in *Pillow Talk*, its role is in the service of comedy. It allows characters to have conversations from different locations. And unlike most uses of the telephone within movies, where the audience lacks the same visual contact as the caller, through the advanced technology of the split screen, Day and Hudson share the same scene simultaneously.

In addition to the telephone, Hudson's playboy bachelor pad is rigged with the same sorts of cutting-edge predigital technology—buttons to engage door locks, drop LPs onto record player platters, lower lights, transform couches into beds—that could be found in James Bond's Aston Martin, in the 1964 film *Goldfinger*. Playboy bachelor apartments were an important example of modern technology used as part of the art of seduction.

See also: Romantic Comedy, The

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—Rick Lilla

PLACE IN THE SUN, A. Based on Theodore Dreiser's novel *An American Tragedy*, *A Place in the Sun* was released in the fall of 1951. Dreiser's book had originally been adapted for the screen in 1931, as the nation spiraled into the depths of the Great Depression. Although the 1931 version of the film did poorly at the box office, director George Stevens was able to convince studio heads at Paramount to remake the film. A steamy romance starring Montgomery Clift and Elizabeth Taylor, the remake was widely popular with audiences, proving to be, it seems, a perfect filmic representative of America's post-WWII angst.

The film opens with George Eastman (Clift), the son of poor, uneducated church workers, accepting a job at his wealthy uncle's factory. It is a job with little status and even less pay, but George works hard and shows himself to be reliable. Despite being warned against fraternizing with the women with whom he works, George begins secretly dating another factory worker, Alice "Al" Tripp (Shelley Winters), whom he eventually impregnates. While carrying on his covert affair with Alice, George meets Angela Vickers (Taylor), a beautiful socialite who is intrigued by the handsome, charismatically simple young man. George falls hard for Angela, losing all interest in Alice. He now tries to convince the forlorn Alice to have an abortion; although she tries to accommodate George's request, she cannot find a doctor willing to do the procedure. Sensing George's feelings for Angela, and terribly hurt by his betrayal, Alice threatens to reveal her condition to Angela. Desperate, George contemplates drowning Alice in order to clear the way to marry Angela. Renting a boat, he rows Alice out onto the lake. As night falls, however, he realizes that he cannot go through with his plan. Alice,



Film stars Elizabeth Taylor and Montgomery Clift in the 1951 Paramount film *A Place in the Sun*. (Picture Post/Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

sensing that something is tragically wrong, stands up in order to approach and comfort him. The boat begins to rock, finally overturning; Alice is drowned, but George makes it back to shore. The body is eventually recovered, Alice's pregnancy and their relationship are revealed, and George is convicted of murder. The film ends with George walking to the gallows.

Clift had appeared in a number of unremarkable films before he made *A Place in the Sun*—*The Search* (1948) and *The Big Lift*—but he had made a name for himself in Howard Hawks's powerful Western *Red River* (1948). Using his method-acting skills, Clift, it seems, inspired even John Wayne's performance in the latter picture. Perfectly cast in *A Place in the Sun*, Clift was emblematic of a new breed of young actors—Marlon Brando, James Dean, Paul Newman—who played existentially tortured men-boys: provocative, childlike subjects of their passions who seem unable to provide direction for themselves or others. Hauntingly attractive, Clift's George Eastman appears directionless and powerless when he interacts with Alice and Angela. It is Alice, after all, who comes to George's room after he has naively informed her of his landlady's restriction regarding guests; and it is Angela who whispers that he should "tell mamma all." Audiences thrilled at the pairing of Clift and Taylor, two of Hollywood's hottest young stars, seemingly unaware that in rooting for the pair, they were ignoring George's immoral and disturbingly irresponsible treatment of Alice and their unborn child.

Interestingly, Paramount feared that *A Place in the Sun* would fail at the box office, and thus delayed its release. The film proved a commercial hit, though; it also received nine Academy Award nominations, and took home Oscars for Best Picture, Best Director for Stevens, Best Actor for Clift, and Best Actress in a supporting role for Winters.

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—Rick Lilla

PLANET OF THE APES. Arriving as it did in 1968, at the height of one of the most culturally important decades in American history, *Planet of the Apes* became more than a mere science fiction adventure; it became a cultural phenomenon, posing important questions for viewers and critics alike. Ground breaking make-up effects and performances from legends like Charlton Heston helped to usher in an era when science fiction films would be taken seriously as entertainment vehicles that could be extraordinarily profitable. *Planet of the Apes* would spawn four successful movie sequels, two television series, massive amounts of merchandise, and a twenty-first-century remake.

The intriguing screenplay for *Planet of the Apes* was originally drafted by Rod Serling, of television's *Twilight Zone*, and then fleshed out by Michael Wilson. The story opens with four astronauts—three men and a woman—on a mission to the stars. Placing themselves in a state of suspended animation within sealed pods, they sleep while their ship travels thousands of years into the future. When the men awaken—the female astronaut's pod was damaged and she is long dead—they find themselves on an Earth-like planet populated by intelligent apes and humans who have yet to learn to read, write, or even speak. The ape population is rigidly divided by caste, class, and race: Orangutans—light-skinned, light-furred and blond-headed—fill elite positions as societal administrators, politicians, and lawyers; chimpanzees—light-skinned, dark-furred, and dark-headed—constitute the learned class of scientists and teachers; while gorillas—dark-skinned, dark-furred, and dark-headed—function as the police and military. Humans are seen as nothing more than mindless animals to be captured, imprisoned and used for purposes of experimentation and entertainment. In the end, after barely escaping with his life, George Taylor (Heston), the only surviving astronaut, heads into the "forbidden" territories in search of a new life with a mostly mute human mate who is indigenous to the planet. What he discovers, in one of the most iconic endings in film history—he uncovers the remnants of the Statue of Liberty in the rubble left after nuclear war—is that he has been on Earth all along.



Charlton Heston is restrained with a leash and collar by two actors playing apemen in a still from director Franklin Schaffner's film *Planet of the Apes*, 1968. (Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

The film raises provocative questions about American society, both as it was during the 1960s and as it is today. While being taken prisoner, Taylor suffers a neck wound and is initially unable to speak, making him seem just like the other humans on the planet. Thrown into a barred cell, he draws the attention of two scientists, Zira (Kim Hunter) and Cornelius (Roddy McDowell), and the animus of their administrative boss, Dr. Zaius (Maurice Evans), Minister of Science and Chief Defender of the Faith. The scientists begin to believe that Taylor—"Bright Eyes," Zira calls him—is different from other humans—he is intelligent, they suggest. Ultimately recovering his voice, he is taken before a three-ape tribunal. Eerily, the hearing touches on both the 1858 Dred Scott case and the 1925 Scopes Trial. Like Dred Scott—whom the Supreme Court decided

had no right to bring a suit against his master because he was a slave, and thus not a citizen but merely property—because Taylor is a "man," he has no rights under ape law. If there is to be a trial, however, it will be, like the Scopes Trial, one that concerns an issue of scientific heresy—arguing evolution over creation.

The prosecuting attorney, Dr. Honourous (James Daly), claims that his case is simple, based as it is on the apes' First Article of Faith: that the Almighty created apes in His image; He gave them souls and minds, and made them lords of the planet. Certain unorthodox scientists, though, have chosen to study humans—to study evolution. Zira and Cornelius are accused of tampering with Taylor and making him into a "speaking monster." For their part, the scientists argue that Taylor, who, if the prosecutor is correct, cannot have come from another planet, must be part of their planet's evolutionary chain—a close relative of apes—a notion the tribunal members cannot countenance. One-by-one they literally cover ears, eyes, and mouth in a disturbing expression of hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil. Zira and Cornelius are charged by the state with scientific heresy. Threatened with emasculation and deadening experimental brain

surgery, Taylor, along with his beautiful mate, escapes with the help of Zira, Cornelius, and Dr. Zaius.

Resonant with themes related to 1960s' debates over religion and science, the struggle for civil rights, and the specter of Cold War politics, *Planet of the Apes* struck a powerful chord with audiences. The films that followed in the series would continue to address questions related to issues of class, race, and religion.

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—Richard A. Hall

PLATOON. *Platoon* (1986) was the first film in writer/director Oliver Stone's Vietnam War trilogy, which also included *Born on the Fourth of July* (1989) and *Heaven and Earth* (1993). Shot on location in the Philippines for just \$6 million, the film was a critical and commercial success, garnering eight Academy Award nominations, including wins for Best Director and Best Picture, and earning over \$130 million in its initial release. It created a sensation in the United States, prompting a special screening for political leaders in Washington, D.C., frenzied national media coverage, and lines around the block. *Platoon* reinvigorated the Vietnam War-film genre and encouraged release of a spate of Vietnam-related films in the late 1980s.

Platoon follows the tour of duty of Chris Taylor, a naive enlistee new to Vietnam in 1967. Modeled loosely on Stone himself, Taylor is a son of privilege who rebelled against expectations by dropping out of college to join the Army. The film is essentially a coming-of-age drama in which Taylor confronts the harsh realities of the Vietnam combat zone and becomes embroiled in a conflict between two sergeants, Barnes and Elias, who represent competing leadership styles, opposing regional and political perspectives, realism and idealism, authoritarianism and rebellion, and, most broadly, darkness and light themselves. The conflict between Barnes and Elias comes to a head during the village sequence, a disturbing portrait of American soldiers run amok in not-so-subtle imitation of the 1968 My Lai Massacre. Barnes kills a Vietnamese woman in cold blood, Elias threatens to report him to military authorities, and Barnes threatens to kill Elias. He eventually succeeds, cutting Elias down in the midst of a fire-fight. The martyred Elias survives long enough to raise questions about Barnes's role in his death, and Taylor becomes convinced that Barnes must be killed. The film concludes with a chaotic battle involving relentless attacks by a faceless Vietnamese enemy that is blunted only by air strikes directly on the American base. Afterward, Taylor awakens alone in an Eden-like clearing and surveys the destruction all around him. He finds a wounded Barnes writhing in pain and seizes the opportunity to execute



Scene from the 1986 film *Platoon*, starring (left to right) Willem Dafoe, Charlie Sheen, and Tom Berenger. Directed by Oliver Stone. (Photofest)

him. Wounded himself, Taylor returns home altered and scarred, having avenged Elias by becoming like Barnes.

Critics and veterans alike hailed *Platoon* for its authentic portrayal of Americans' struggles in Vietnam. *Platoon's* realism was a departure from the epic expressionism of *The Deer Hunter* (1978), the surrealism of *Apocalypse Now* (1979), and the cartoonish violence of *Rambo I* and *II* (1982 and 1985, respectively), but its authenticity rested not with the melodramatic plot but rather with the textural details of experience: dappled light filtering through jungle canopy, the whine of mosquitoes at night, the casual intimacy of comrades in arms, the whirl and chop of helicopters, the sweat and slang and exhaustion. The concept of authenticity lay at the core of the film's marketing strategy, with the original trailer emphasizing Stone's own status as a Vietnam veteran. *Platoon* also launched military technical advisor Dale Dye's Hollywood consultancy and established actor "boot camp" as an essential feature of war film preparation.

Despite its claim to realism, *Platoon* spends no time on the political dynamics of the war, focusing instead on a host of conflicts between American soldiers. The men of the platoon are divided by class, race, regionalism, their drugs of choice, and their relationship to the military, with draftees and lifers coexisting in states of mutual resentment. These literal, historical conflicts are reflected metaphorically in numerous references to "friendly fire," the act of soldiers shooting their own. In his final monologue, Taylor reflects, "We did not fight the enemy, we fought ourselves, and the enemy was within

us.” These are arguably the most famous lines of the film. Scholars have taken issue with the solipsism of this construction, which posits the reasons for the war—and by extension, critiques of American foreign policy—as essentially irrelevant. With the motives for U.S. intervention and the causes of American defeat in Vietnam so excised, *Platoon* frames the war as an individual’s struggle against the elements and his own moral failings. Ultimately, *Platoon* marked a turning point for Vietnam veterans, who found redemption from the war’s brutality and futility in the film’s portrayal of struggle, sacrifice, and victimization.

See also: Stone, Oliver; War Film, The

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—Meredith H. Lair

POSTMAN ALWAYS RINGS TWICE, THE. Tay Garnett’s *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1946) represents the third attempt to bring James M. Cain’s 1934 novel of the same name to the screen—the first two were Pierre Chenal’s *Le dernier tournant* (1939) and Luchino Visconti’s *Ossessione* (1943)—but for most American film aficionados it remains, in spite of Bob Rafelson’s 1981 remake, the definitive version of Cain’s lurid melodrama. Viewed from a 1940s perspective, however, Billy Wilder’s *Double Indemnity* (1943), another Cain adaptation, cast a long shadow over crime films of this era, and its influence on *The Postman Always Rings Twice* was therefore far greater than either its French or Italian predecessors.

As an example of what later critics would call film noir, *Postman* exhibits many (though not all) of the traits that define this genre. Its protagonists, Frank Chambers (John Garfield) and Cora Smith (Lana Turner), are both adulterous and homicidal, and their scheme to eliminate Cora’s hapless husband strikes a familiar chord in movies where murders are committed for lust and profit. Noir husbands are generally a disposable commodity, and like their counterparts in *Double Indemnity*, Nick and Cora’s attempt to pass off a murder as an accident soon goes awry. As for the mutual distrust that almost derails their relationship, that too is a familiar motif in noir couplings, and while Nick and Cora do not actually try to kill each other, each one’s suspicions of the other make it easy for an unscrupulous district attorney (played by Leon Ames) to turn them against each other when their case comes to trial.

Paradoxically, *Postman*’s doomed lovers can almost be seen as innocents in crime, and certainly when compared with *Double Indemnity*’s Walter Neff and Phyllis Dietrichson, their fumbling attempts to finish off Cora’s husband clearly reveal a degree of sheer incompetence that sets them apart from more practiced killers. John Garfield’s Frank Chambers is, in fact, a drifter, a basically weak (albeit sensual) character whose

first impulse is simply to run off with Cora and take his chances on the road. As for Lana Turner's Cora, her character is more femme than fatale, and compared with Barbara Stanwyck's Phyllis, Turner's Cora possesses comparatively little of the killer instinct; her mood swings throughout the film suggest that Garnett couldn't quite bring himself to transform a celluloid sex goddess into a psychopathic monster. Noir females tend to be far more single-minded—and therefore deadlier—than their male counterparts, while *Postman's* protagonists are almost equally confused by fear and desire, as well as ambivalent about each other and about the crime they are “fated” to commit.

Visually, *Postman* seldom exhibits the preference for low-key lighting, spatial constriction, or disorienting angles of perception that constitute the cinematic signature of noir directors. In contrast to the haunted expressionistic interiors of noirish films like *Key Largo* (1948) or *Kiss Me Deadly* (1955), Sidney Wagner (*Postman's* cinematographer) employs a more realistic lighting scheme throughout, and as a result, our protagonists are able to move about in a bright, sunlit world, oblivious to the deadly traps that both passion and an unseen vengeance have created for them. And though the murder of Cora's husband is shot in pitch darkness, on a treacherously twisty country road—as it should be—virtually every other scene takes place in a series of well-lighted rooms and open spaces.

However, the fierce determinism that rules over human lives and literary plotlines in film noir at last claims both Nick and Cora as its victims, and it is this absurd twist of fate or chance that links *Postman* most directly to the world of noir melodrama. Thus, having been at last reconciled to one another, and having found themselves free from prosecution for crimes for which they cannot be punished, Nick and Cora are nevertheless forced to pay for their sins. Fate first strikes Cora, who suddenly dies in an accidental drowning, and then Nick, who is immediately accused of plotting her death, even though he is guiltless of any criminal intent. And though justice of a rough sort is clearly served here, it is a twisted kind of justice that the noir universe metes out, a system of absurd retributions that parody the very principle of justice they supposedly embody. As Nick observes, ironically, on his way to the gas chamber, the “postman” has indeed rung twice, and he will now be punished for the crime he did not commit. Such an ending, of course, demands a curious suspension of the very empathy for those criminal passions the entire film has labored to elicit, but that is precisely what noir filmmakers appear to demand of their audiences: an emotional detachment that deprives them of whatever moral satisfaction they might have derived from a more conventional and conventionally ritualized spectacle of crime and punishment.

See also: Double Indemnity ; Film Noir; Wilder, Billy

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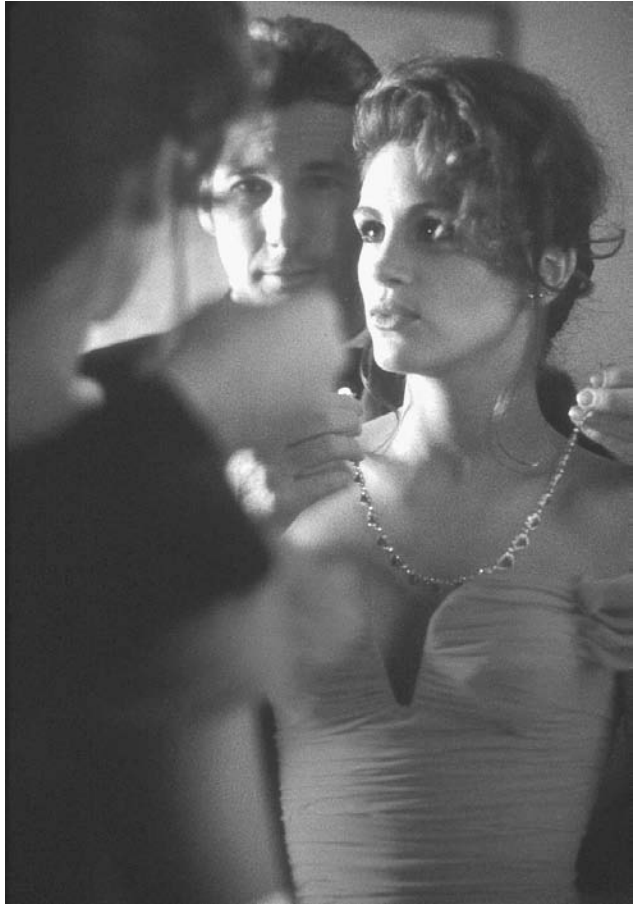
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—Robert Platzner

PRETTY WOMAN. One of the biggest box-office successes of 1990, *Pretty Woman* marked Julia Roberts's rise to superstardom and the reinvigoration of the "woman's film" in mass culture. The film, a latter-day cross between Cinderella and Pygmalion, updates the classic convention of the damsel in distress saved by a worthy man. This time around, it's Vivian Ward, Roberts's hooker-with-a-heart-of-gold, who comes to the moral and emotional salvation of Edward Lewis, the uptight corporate raider played by Richard Gere. Marketability concerns shaped *Pretty Woman*'s rosy outcome. J. F. Lawton's original script for 3,000—the amount Edward pays Vivian for a week of her services—ended the pair's weeklong escape on a darker note. Only editing by veteran sitcom-writer-turned-director Garry Marshall gave the film its happy ending: when Edward arrives in a shining white limo to sweep Vivian off her feet, she informs him that the heroine of her fairy tale rescues the hero "right back."

The romance begins as a business transaction. Edward is in Los Angeles for work. Dumped over the phone by his live-in girlfriend, he drives off in his lawyer's sports car, looking to blow off steam. A quick stop to ask for directions from the leggy Vivian turns into a lesson on driving a stick shift as Vivian pilots the odd couple toward Edward's posh Beverly Hills hotel. In the days that follow, Edward exposes Vivian to high culture, chartering a private plane to San Francisco to attend the opera and taking her to a polo match. In return, Vivian teaches Edward to walk barefoot in the park and to express his emotions, until then repressed on account of an unloving father (his



Scene from the 1986 film *Pretty Woman*, starring Richard Gere and Julia Roberts. Directed by Garry Marshall. (Photofest)

third takeover victim). From their week together, Vivian gains an upgraded wardrobe and a new knowledge of flatware etiquette, but it is Edward who emerges the more profoundly changed: breaking with old habits, he negotiates a friendly merger with the owner of a shipbuilding company.

Wildly popular with audiences, *Pretty Woman* was criticized for idealizing prostitution and for its uncomplicated portrayal of money buying respect, if not morality or happiness, for its characters. In one memorable scene, Vivian reenters a Rodeo Drive boutique where earlier, dressed in her Hollywood Boulevard attire, she had been snubbed by a salesgirl. Richard announces to the sales staff that the couple is “going to be spending an obscene amount of money in here.” They do. Critics argued that the film dodged the serious inequalities of Vivian’s situation and made few connections to the broader picture of women’s sexual and economic exploitation. The movie treated the AIDS crisis that had rocked Reagan-era America lightly in a scene where Vivian fans out a rainbow array of condoms for Edward’s choosing.

The film also made a splash in the trade and popular presses for its target audience. In the previous two decades, the industry had treated the female demographic as peripheral to the success of big-budget action and horror blockbusters. *Pretty Woman* was interpreted as part of a broader trend in the American film industry to target movies at women. However, the representation of women in this new wave of women’s films was ambiguous. A number of modestly budgeted films from the late 1970s and 1980s had cast a skeptical eye on marriage and traditional romance. These films, which included *Annie Hall* (1977) and *Kramer vs. Kramer* (1979), captured the lingering tensions surrounding the push for women’s professional and sexual equality. Some commentators viewed *Pretty Woman* as a retreat from the social and political frankness of these films to the timeworn conventions of fairy-tale romance.

Yet critics who dismissed *Pretty Woman* as escapist stumbled over how to explain its smashing success among female viewers. The performances remain memorable. Roberts’s portrayal of the free-spirited, sharp-witted Vivian earned her a Best Actress Oscar nomination. Supporting cast member Laura San Giacomo winningly humanized Vivian’s drug-addled hooker roommate, as did Hector Elizondo, the punctilious hotel manager who takes Vivian under his wing. Fans of the film have argued that, rather than patronizing women with the old Prince Charming myth, *Pretty Woman* revises it, winking at audiences attuned to Hollywood fairy tales. The film leaves the final word not to Vivian or Edward, embracing on her fire escape, but to a homeless man wandering the streets of Los Angeles. “This is Hollywood,” he announces, “land of dreams.” With this framing device, *Pretty Woman* signaled its debt to fantasy, and audiences’ hunger for the same.

See also: Romantic Comedy, The

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—Diana Lemberg

PRIDE OF THE YANKEES, THE. *The Pride of the Yankees* (1942) is director Sam Wood's dramatic biopic of New York Yankees baseball star Lou Gehrig, whose 1941 death at age 37 from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), a disease that more commonly bears his name, is one of the great tragedies in American sports. The film was a critical success, garnering an Oscar for Best Film Editing and earning 10 other nominations, but its long-term legacy is as one of Hollywood's most revered baseball films, an all-American hero story, classic romance, and triumphant meditation on the immutability of the American Dream.

Damon Runyon's prologue introduces the film as the story of a humble hero who carried himself with modest dignity and faced his own untimely death gracefully. Wood's film, however, is more than mere cinematic biography. Gehrig's life story becomes a quintessentially American fable, a soaring affirmation of the American Dream tinged in tragic, but simultaneously triumphal, overtones that resonated with its World War II era audience. It is the story of what an all-American boy could achieve, fulfilling not only his own dreams but those of his hardworking German immigrant parents, as well. In the end, Gehrig courageously confronted his own mortality, exemplified by his famous "Luckiest Man" speech at Yankee Stadium, suggesting that while hard times loomed, Americans could persevere.

Although Wood took some license in telling the story, *The Pride of the Yankees* is a relatively accurate account of Gehrig's life. In particular, the film is faithful to the early life of Lou Gehrig (Gary Cooper)—his relationship with his immigrant parents, devotion to his mother (Elsa Janssen), and the circumstances that led to the start of his professional baseball career with the New York Yankees. On the other hand, there was some fictionalization in the portrayal of Gehrig's romance and marriage to Chicago socialite Eleanor Twitchell (Teresa Wright), his inspirational home-run-hitting exploits for hospitalized children, and other aspects of his baseball career. Several real baseball stars played themselves in the film, including Gehrig's teammates Bill Dickey and the legendary Babe Ruth. Much of the film's success in capturing the essence of its protagonist can be attributed to Gary Cooper. Cooper, despite being an abysmal baseball player who batted from the wrong side of the plate, looked much like Gehrig and his penchant for taking on humble, stoic characters had well prepared him to adopt the persona of the notoriously sober baseball superstar.

The Pride of the Yankees is often regarded as one of the best of Hollywood's baseball films, and is certainly a classic tale of a first-generation American's journey from rags to riches, but it is also a wonderfully crafted love story. In fact, it is the romance of Lou and Eleanor Gehrig, tracing their lives from the height of his career on the diamond through his struggle with a fatal disease, which serves as the narrative backbone of the film. Director Wood later adopted an almost identical format for his 1949 baseball

drama *The Stratton Story*, starring Jimmy Stewart and June Allyson. To some degree the emphasis on personal relationships, and the focus on the human elements of the story, was meant to appeal to a largely female wartime audience. Cooper and Wright possessed such a charming chemistry, and so capably captured the simple magic of everyday romance, that they both earned Oscar nominations for their performances. Irving Berlin's "Always," a favorite tune of the real-life Gehrigs, added a personal touch to the movie's romantic tone.

Despite the film's somewhat saccharine tone, it remains a classic example of both sports and wartime cinema. Baseball, the "National Pastime," was at the height of its cultural prominence when *The Pride of the Yankees* was released. There can be no doubt that Wood's film, with a screenplay co-scripted by noted sportswriter Paul Gallico, would remind wartime audiences of ideal American virtues—modesty, fairness, and courageous resilience—embodied in both Lou Gehrig and the sport he played.

See also: Sports Film, The

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—Nathan M. Corzine

PRODUCERS, THE. Winning an Academy Award for Best Writing, Story and Screenplay, *The Producers* (1968) is a brilliant satire that made writer-director Mel Brooks a comedic sensation, although Brooks would later claim that *Blazing Saddles* (1974) was his best work. *The Producers*, which Brooks resurrected as a Tony-winning Broadway musical by the same name in 2001 and in a film adaptation of the musical in 2005, broke new ground in American cinema by aggressively mocking Adolf Hitler and his infamous Nazi storm troopers. The satirical play within the film, which the character of Max Bialystock described as "practically a love letter to Hitler," also poked fun at the allegedly naive cheerfulness of *The Sound of Music* (1965), which similarly juxtaposed carefree singing and dancing against a fascist Axis backdrop. Banned in Germany for its relentless parody of the Third Reich, *The Producers* became a cult classic among Jews on both sides of the Atlantic.

"I picked the wrong play, the wrong director, the wrong cast," moans theatrical producer Max Bialystock (Zero Mostel) near the end of *The Producers*. Throwing up his hands and lamenting his fate as an inmate at the state penitentiary, he wonders,

"Where did I go right?" Bialystock's accountant-turned-partner Leo Bloom (Gene Wilder) hysterically casts about for the pair's doctored ledgers and threatens to turn himself into the police in exchange for leniency. "Springtime for Hitler: A Gay Romp with Adolf and Eva in Berchtesgarden," Bialystock and Bloom's patently offensive play, had become "the biggest hit on Broadway." But for Bialystock and Bloom, right was wrong and success meant failure. All that the crooked duo had to do was to produce a flop and they would walk away with \$2 million. How hard could it be?

Rated PG-13 for "sexual humor and references," *The Producers* opens with a scene of Bialystock clutching and being clutched by a little old lady (Estelle Winwood) known by the moniker "hold me, touch me." Bloom, an accountant from the firm Whitehall and Marks hired to balance Bialystock's books, walks in on the middle-aged producer and one of his octogenarian investors engaged in sexual role-playing. Pressured by Bialystock to use "creative accounting," Bloom discovers that with a play guaranteed to fail, "a producer could make more money with a flop than he could with a hit." Bialystock quickly convinces Bloom to quit his job in order to co-produce a flop that would make the pair millionaires in unspent seed money. Putting their greed ahead of their antifascist ideals, the once-popular producer and his new partner in crime don swastika armbands in order to acquire the rights to "Springtime for Hitler" from ex-Nazi Franz Liebkind (Kenneth Mars).

Moving to the second phase of Bialystock and Bloom's seemingly foolproof scheme, Bialystock romances little old ladies until he has raised \$2 million in checks made out to "cash," and hires Ulla (Lee Meredith), a gorgeous blonde but English-deficient Swede, to be his new receptionist. With Bloom, Bialystock next hires the cross-dressing Roger De Bris (Christopher Hewitt) to direct the production. Finally, "Springtime for Hitler" opens, and smartly dressed theatergoers watch in shock as Lorenzo St. DuBois (Dick Shawn) plays an ostentatiously bisexual Hitler and Brooks himself appears in an acerbically satirical cameo: "Don't be stupid, be a smartie./Come and join the Nazi party." However, even the show's climactic inclusion of a spinning swastika, comprised of leather-garbed storm troopers of the Rockette variety, fails to sufficiently offend the theatergoing masses. Ironically, the play becomes a hit, sending Bialystock and Bloom to Sing Sing where they plot their next production, "Prisoners of Love."

The Producers ranks among the best films ever produced with the goal of focusing attention on the Holocaust. Two decades after the Nazis systematically murdered millions of Jews, homosexuals, gypsies, and dissidents, Brooks effectively recast—through Jewish humor—Hitler as an object of ridicule at the mercy of Jewish producers and commercialization. Confronted with mixed reviews for the film, Brooks explained, "More than anything, the great Holocaust by the Nazis is probably the great outrage of the Twentieth Century . . . if I get on the soapbox and wax eloquently, it'll be blown away in the wind, but if I do 'springtime for Hitler' it'll never be forgotten." Although the 2001 musical proved instantly successful, Brooks deserves more acclaim for taking on Hitler in America in 1968.

See also: Music in Film; Musical, The



Janet Leigh screams in the famous shower scene from the film *Psycho*, directed by Alfred Hitchcock, 1960. (Paramount Pictures/Courtesy of Getty Images)

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—Alan Kennedy-Shaffer

PSYCHO. At the time of its release in the summer of 1960, *Psycho* was a box-office sensation, shattering attendance records for the year. Although critics initially gave it mixed reviews, Alfred Hitchcock's low-budget black-

and-white thriller is now regarded as a cinematic masterpiece.

Based on the Wisconsin serial killer, Ed Gein, *Psycho* first appeared in 1959 as a novel written by Robert Bloch. After purchasing the rights from Bloch, Hitchcock hired Joseph Stefano to write the screenplay, but soon ran into trouble with his studio. Paramount executives could see no commercial potential in a movie that killed off the heroine in the first half, but this was precisely the twist that appealed to Hitchcock. He agreed to finance the film himself once Paramount agreed to distribute it, then shot it using his television crew on a rapid schedule.

Psycho's plot revolves around a series of crimes. After Marion Crane (Janet Leigh) impulsively steals \$40,000 from her employer, she drives all day to meet her boyfriend Sam (John Gavin), but becomes tired and stops at the Bates Motel where Norman (Anthony Perkins) gives her a room. That night, she is murdered in the shower by what appears to be a crazy old woman. Later, Arbogast (Martin Balsam), a private detective investigating the case, is also murdered, and Marion's sister Lila (Vera Miles) and Sam try to find out what happened. When Lila tries to speak with Mrs. Bates in the basement, she too is nearly murdered, but Sam rescues her just in time.

Psycho succeeds as a thriller because of its cinematic technique. From the opening credits it is clear that *Psycho* is a strikingly original film. Veteran Hitchcock collaborator

Bernard Herrmann uses only the string section in his orchestral score, starkly complementing the crisscrossing horizontal and vertical lines of Saul Bass's visuals. Following the credits, Hitchcock's camera pans the Phoenix cityscape and penetrates the hotel window where Marion and Sam enjoy a Friday afternoon tryst—half-dressed. It is the first of many instances in *Psycho* where the viewer is positioned as a voyeur. A more overt example occurs after Norman and Marion's mildly flirtatious dinner conversation. When Marion retires to her room, Norman removes a picture from overtop a peephole in the adjacent room and stares at Marion in her underwear. Thanks to the subjective camera shot, we are staring at Marion just as Norman is.

Throughout *Psycho*, Hitchcock plays upon the voyeuristic tendencies of the audience by provocatively revealing some details while carefully concealing others. In 1960, it was still relatively unusual to show a woman on-screen dressed only in a bra and half-slip. Likewise, it was utterly taboo to flush a toilet as Marion does at the Bates Motel after disposing of some scraps of paper. Distracted by these images, audiences are less aware of what they are not seeing. Mrs. Bates, for example, speaks to Norman throughout the film, but the viewer does not see her face until the end.

The most blatant appeal to voyeurism in *Psycho* occurs during the shower scene. One of the most famous sequences in cinematic history, the shower scene powerfully suggests erotic violence without ever really showing anything. At no point in the 78-shot, 45-second sequence does the viewer see any forbidden body parts, and only once does the knife appear to make contact with the body. Instead the violence is achieved through montage, substituting film cuts for cutting of the skin. The high-pitched violin motif that Herrmann devised to accompany the murder is equally renowned and often parodied in popular culture, as in a 1990 episode of *The Simpsons*, entitled, "Itchy & Scratchy & Marge."

Psycho spawned a whole new subgenre of horror, the "slasher," with films like *Halloween* (1978) and *Friday the 13th* (1980) employing many of *Psycho*'s innovations. Slasher films generally feature a psychologically disturbed killer who has a preference for knives and sexually active female victims. *Psycho* has also inspired numerous sequels, homages, and even a shot-for-shot remake by Gus Van Sant in 1998. Tributes to *Psycho* range from lowbrow comedy, such as Mel Brooks's *High Anxiety* (1977) to art-house tragedy in Brian De Palma's *Dressed to Kill* (1980). Arguably Hitchcock's greatest film, *Psycho* continues to surprise, horrify, and elate viewers with its stunning originality and masterful technique.

See also: Hitchcock, Alfred

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—Joseph Christopher Schaub

PULP FICTION. Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* (1994) merges classic American crime genre techniques and characters into a single self-reflexive homage. As an example of postmodern cinema, it also includes a barrage of musical, visual, and dialogic popular culture references. The film is made up of three individual but interconnected stories, each introduced with a title card. It is the references themselves that make *Pulp Fiction* so attuned to American audiences, with strictly American cars, books, television, and music constantly shown and heard in the background.

Setting the tone for this uniquely American filmic experience, the first story, "Vincent Vega and Marsellus Wallace's Wife," is preceded by a running commentary on the differences between McDonald's in Amsterdam and in the United States. Told from the American perspective of hitman Vincent Vega (John Travolta), the dialogue reveals several cultural differences between the two countries. Vincent is accompanied by his partner Jules Winnfield (Samuel L. Jackson), and though both men wear black suits and carry guns, they're more humanized than typical hitmen of the crime genre.

In "Vincent Vega and Marsellus Wallace's Wife" Vincent serves as proxy on a date with the wife of his boss, Marsellus Wallace (Ving Rhames). He takes Marsellus's wife Mia (Uma Thurman) to the 1950s-theme restaurant "Jack Rabbit Slim's." Easily the pinnacle of American pop culture references in the film, Vincent and Mia see posters for 1950s and '60s movies, sit in a booth shaped like an old Chrysler, and order the "Douglas Sirk steak" and the "Durward Kirby burger" while interacting with servers impersonating celebrities such as Ed Sullivan, Buddy Holly, Marilyn Monroe, and Ricky Nelson.



Scene from the 1986 film *Pulp Fiction*, starring John Travolta (left) and Samuel L. Jackson. Directed by Quentin Tarantino. (Photofest)

In the prologue for the second story, “The Gold Watch,” a close-up of an old TV showing the 1959 American children’s cartoon *Clutch Cargo* is shown. Tarantino opted to use this reference to allude to this scene as a flashback, further emphasizing that *Pulp Fiction* is best understood by American viewers.

“The Gold Watch” follows boxer Butch Coolidge (Bruce Willis) after double-crossing Marsellus on a fight. Butch’s escape is complicated by his deceased father’s gold watch, which was bestowed on him as a child by Captain Koons (Christopher Walken), who was a POW with his father during the Vietnam War. Tarantino chooses *The Losers* (1968)—a film playing on Butch’s motel TV about motorcyclists sent by the CIA to rescue a presidential advisor in Cambodia—to abruptly wake Butch from a deep sleep. This cultural reference reminds viewers of his father’s war, and now his own war against Marsellus. With his gold watch still on the nightstand in his apartment, Butch risks returning for it. Here Butch’s story intersects Vincent’s, as the latter is waiting for Butch at his apartment. Butch shoots Vincent, who dies with a copy of the Peter O’Donnell pulp novel *Modesty Blaise* on his lap.

The third story, “The Bonnie Situation,” begins where “Vincent Vega and Marsellus Wallace’s Wife” left off. This segment contains more up-to-date pop and pulp culture references, especially to Los Angeles. In this story, Vincent mistakenly shoots and kills an informant while he and Jules are driving home from the job in the first story. Exposed in suburban Los Angeles with a bloody car, they stop at Jimmie Dimmick’s (Quentin Tarantino) modish house while Winston “The Wolf” Wolfe (Harvey Keitel) is called in to “solve problems.” Jimmie is introduced wearing a bathrobe over his Detroit metro magazine *Orbit* T-shirt while giving a speech about drinking gourmet coffee. Jimmie gives Vincent and Jules clean T-shirts of the old comic-strip character Krazy Kat, and the “Banana Slug” campus mascot of University of California Santa Cruz.

The film ends where it began, in the Hawthorne Grill in Los Angeles. Here, Jules makes a final speech of redemption amidst an unrelated robbery. In his speech he references *Happy Days*’ “The Fonz” when he tells one of the robbers to “be cool.”

Pulp Fiction’s effective use of nonlinear storytelling paired with its incredibly diverse cultural references allow it to accomplish more than any traditional crime drama ever could. The film won 43 awards, including an Oscar for Best Writing and the Golden Palm at the Cannes Film Festival. With its extensive use of pastiche, *Pulp Fiction* transcends the crime genre, pulling together references from popular American culture, pulp and hard-boiled crime fiction, French New Wave, Samurai cinema, and more.

See also: Editing; Gangster Film, The

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—Adam Dean

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QUIET MAN, THE. With *The Quiet Man* (1952), director John Ford offered an intensely personal film that was the culmination of an infamously extended struggle with the Hollywood studio system. The result, more than 15 years in the making, was a lush homage to the director's Irish roots, combining nostalgia with something heretofore lacking in the Fordian oeuvre: a sprightly romantic love story. The film, arguably Ford's most beloved, earned the director his fourth and final Best Director Oscar.

Ford had tinkered with *The Quiet Man* for years after discovering Maurice Walsh's short story in a 1933 edition of the *Saturday Evening Post*. Although he made several attempts in the 1930s and 1940s to produce a film version, Hollywood's major studio heads insisted that Ford's pet project had no commercial potential. Nevertheless, he continuously played with the story, adding dramatic depth, and casting the film with regulars from his other projects—Maureen O'Hara, John Wayne, and Victor McLaglen among them—years before he actually found a studio willing to back it.

In the end, Ford was able to convince a second-tier studio, Republic Pictures, to take on his Irish "Taming of the Shrew" tale. Although Ford had spent years tweaking the somewhat thin, mood-based plot of the original short story, commentators still argued that his version of *The Quiet Man* was nothing more than a superficial idyll. Many Irish critics despised the film, offended by its unrealistic, stereotyped portrayal of Irish communities and rituals. Studio head Herbert Yates, convinced the project was a mistake, thought the film's Technicolor green was overwhelming. More pointedly, a generation of feminist critics derided the film, despite the presence of a strong-willed central female character, for perceived misogyny.

Beneath *The Quiet Man's* simple veneer, however, is a well-crafted romance that still connects with contemporary audiences. The plot involves the return to his Innisfree birthplace of Sean "Trooper" Thornton (John Wayne), an Irish American boxer who has killed a man in the ring and who hopes to escape his brutal, materialistic American past by exiling himself to his dimly remembered childhood home. There he runs afoul of local bully Squire "Red Will" Danaher (Victor McLaglen) when he purchases ancestral land coveted by Danaher. This strained relationship is further complicated by

Thornton's courtship of Danaher's sister—the fiery Mary Kate Danaher (Maureen O'Hara). When Mary Kate refuses to consummate her marriage to Thornton until she receives her dowry, held from her by her brother, the former boxer is forced to overcome his personal demons and confront Danaher. Once Thornton chooses to use his fists again, the two men meet in one of Hollywood's most celebrated fight sequences, a bare-fisted brawl that takes them across the Innisfree countryside surrounded by a swarm of local onlookers.

How Green Was My Valley author Richard Llewellyn drafted the screenplay for *The Quiet Man*, and the script's sentimental feel recalls that from Ford's 1941 Best Picture Oscar winner. The setting for this fable of two people who must tame themselves before they can live happily together is a magical community whose values represent the antithesis of the American obsession with individualism and accumulation. Ford's Innisfree is a place where time has no meaning. His Ireland is the sort of dreamscape that could exist only in the mind of the Irish exile—and Ford was exactly that. Cutting elements that would have addressed internecine political conflicts—in one version Sean Thornton would have joined the IRA—Ford instead envisioned a space where Catholics and Protestants lived in relative peace, where pub patrons broke into spontaneous song, and where traditional courtship rituals were painstakingly overseen by local tippler Michaelleen Oge Flynn (Barry Fitzgerald).

Ultimately, *The Quiet Man* served as a semiautobiographical cinematic homecoming for Ford. Although his Ireland was by turns too green, too comic, and too musical, it was also a place that resonated with American audiences eager to escape to a simple and beautiful place after the years of World War II and early Cold War turmoil. Subsequent audiences, beset by different stresses, have proven just as eager to escape, even if only for a while, to Innisfree.

See also: Ford, John; Melodrama, The

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—Nathan M. Corzine

REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE. *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), directed by Nicholas Ray, received Oscar nominations for Supporting Actress (Natalie Wood), Supporting Actor (Sal Mineo), and Writing for a Motion Picture Story (Ray). The renowned movie is best known for its lead actor, James Dean, who played the malcontented teenager, Jim Stark. This role, in addition to Dean's tragic death in a 1955 car accident at the age 24, made him into an iconic representative of teenage angst.

Rebel Without a Cause is about juvenile delinquency. More interesting are its sources. The three main characters, Jim, Judy (Wood), and "Plato" (Mineo), are estranged from their parents. Jim refers to his family not as a place of refuge and support, but as a "zoo." He feels alienated from his father's effeteness and his parents' bickering; Judy's father refuses her the affection she needs; and Plato's parents are separated and absent. Yet—viewing the film as an historical source—the teenagers' discontent is also the by-product of 1950s affluence and the resulting cultural emphasis on materialism. This is manifest in the lecture scene at the planetarium. Dr. Minton (Ian Wolfe), commenting on the end of the world, states that "We will disappear into the blackness of the space from which we came, destroyed as we began, in a burst of gas and fire. . . . And man, existing alone, seems himself an episode of little consequence." Surely the monologue, and especially the teenagers' troubled reactions to it, are symbolic of their alienation from their parents (which they perceive); but it also reflects anxiety over the purposeless and superficial existence of a materially driven life (which they do not readily perceive). Industrial-capitalist America's emphasis on the material self at the expense of the spiritual self, it appears, bred a sense of a lack of fulfillment, especially in its more sensitive teenaged members. Jim is dejected despite the fact that his father, Frank Stark (Jim Backus), buys him "everything" he wants. Before the so-called "Chickie Run," Jim asks his antagonist, Buzz Gunderson (Corey Allen), "Why do we do this," to which Buzz replies, "You got to do something." That is, ostensibly, "you got to do something" to divert one's attention from the unfulfilling, one-dimensionality of materialist American life. A more explicit anxiety derived from affluence is reflected in the feminization—synonymous with the weakening—of Jim's father, which expresses a fear that affluence cultivates effeteness. Frank is subject to a domineering wife and



Actors (left to right) Sal Mineo, James Dean, and Natalie Wood in a still from director Nicholas Ray's film *Rebel Without a Cause*. (Warner Bros./Getty Images)

mother, who together, Jim claims, “make mush out of him.” This feminization reaches its apogee when Jim discovers his father in an apron.

As a 1950s film, *Rebel Without a Cause* is generally read as a product of the cultural conformity fostered by the so-called second Red Scare—because a direct confrontation with the Soviet Union was not a policy option, anticommunism intensified domestically, which fostered a consensus around conservative values (Whitfield, 1996). Indeed, it may be argued that despite its negative portrayal of middle-class family life, the film actually reinforced Cold War conformity by evaluating personal relationships, rather than assessing economic, political, or social issues (Shaw, 2007). Yet, if the film explores personal relations, it also expresses an anxiety with American affluence and a cultural emphasis on materialism. And it might be—even if it reinforced Cold War militarism—that the feminization of Jim's father was an acute warning that affluence was not only damaging family dynamics, but also was weakening America society during the Cold War—could any 1950s viewer imagine Jim's apron-wearing father as capable of fighting the Soviets? Furthermore, Jim is symbolically a refutation of cultural conformity; the red jacket does indeed represent his angst, but it also marks him as an individual who exists in a metaphorically black-and-white world. He befriended Plato, after all, Judy points out, “when nobody else liked him—[and] that's being strong.” Some cultural commentators believe that Dean's fashionable

rebelliousness helped precipitate the upheavals of the 1960s; if this is the case, then the film may be understood not merely as a cinematic reflection of 1950s (anti)orthodoxy, but also as a cautionary tale foreshadowing the cultural conflicts that exploded during the 1960s.

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—Mark D. Popowski

RIO BRAVO. Director Howard Hawks made no secret of the fact that his film *Rio Bravo* (1959) was a response to the 1952 Fred Zinnemann picture *High Noon*. Hawks found the Zinnemann film politically objectionable, suggesting that it was a thinly veiled attack on the HUAC hearings and the blacklisting of members of the cinematic community. Hawks thought that the adoption of this political position was cowardly, and even dangerously "unpatriotic," as in his mind it failed to take seriously the communist threat issuing from the Soviet Union. He believed that *High Noon* was a cinematic representation of just such a weak-willed political stance, especially in regard to the film's portrayal of its protagonist Will Kane (Gary Cooper), a less than heroic sheriff, who is neither "good enough" to confront a crazed band of killers himself or wise enough to hire real "professionals" to help him turn back the deadly outlaws.

In the end, Hawks found the storyline of *High Noon* absurd, particularly its conclusion, which depicted Kane having to be saved by his "Quaker wife" (Grace Kelly) and ultimately "riding into the sunset," not as the traditional Westerner but as what might be understood by someone like Hawks as an antiviolence liberal, who, in a final act of political defiance, flings his badge into the dust and turns his back on his community. Casting film star John Wayne as his protagonist in *Rio Bravo*, Hawks set out to make what he believed was a real western. Wayne was the perfect leading man for the picture, as he had already established himself as an iconic American film hero; he also agreed wholeheartedly with Hawks's interpretation of *High Noon*.

In *Rio Bravo*, Hawks positioned his protagonist, Sheriff John T. Chance (Wayne), in a similar situation to Will Kane's in *High Noon*. Chance, marshal of Rio Bravo, must confront an angry rancher, Nathan Burdette (John Russell), and his loyal gunmen after Chance arrests the rancher's younger brother Joe (Claude Akins) for murdering an unarmed man during a saloon brawl. Chance must hold the killer in jail until the deputy marshal shows up in six days' time to take him away. Nathan Burdette is not about to let Chance turn his brother over to the marshal, though. Unlike Sheriff Kane in *High Noon*, Chance turns to professionals to deal with his precarious situation, rejecting an offer made by his devoted friend Pat Wheeler (Ward Bond) to let Chance



Actors John Wayne (right) and Ricky Nelson (left) star in the western *Rio Bravo*, 1959. (Archive Photos/Getty Images)

deputize his ranch hands: “Well-meaning amateurs, most of them worried about their wives and kids,” grumbles Chance. Chance’s deputy, the alcoholic Dude (Dean Martin), and an old, crippled jailer, Stumpy (Walter Brennan), stand beside the sheriff. When Wheeler recklessly tries to convince the town’s citizens to help Chance, Burdette’s men ambush him. Wheeler’s ex-bodyguard, Colorado (Ricky Nelson), ultimately joins Chance after rescuing the sheriff in a shoot-out. The sheriff even falls for a mysterious, and wholly un-Quaker-like, woman (Angie Dickinson), who knows how to talk, shoot, and even love him. Eventually, Burdette’s gang abducts Dude and arranges an exchange for Joe. In an explosive finale, the resourceful heroes thwart Burdette’s plans to free Joe and kill Dude.

When *Rio Bravo* was released in 1959, it was hailed by critics and audiences alike as a superlative western; and today, it is often chosen as one of the best genre films in the history of the American cinema. Interestingly, however, although the picture is clearly an example of a classic western, complete with its traditional “heroic loner” protagonist, at least on one level it may be understood as a cinematic declaration of the Cold War politics of Hawks and Wayne. Indeed, it may be argued that *Rio Bravo*, with its emphasis on professional men who are called upon to protect the community from murderous interlopers, is expressive of the antipathy both Hawks and Wayne, and many others in the United States, felt toward the Soviet Union, Communism, and

what they perceived as unpatriotic Americans, Zinnemann and Cooper included. Wayne had established his own anticommunist credentials in his 1952 thriller *Big Jim McClain*, in which he portrayed a HUAC investigator searching for “Reds” in Hawaii; and in *Blood Alley* (1955), in which he contended with the Red Chinese. But despite the contemporary settings and the clear-cut anticommunist sentiments of these latter two films, it may be that *Rio Bravo* is really the most obvious statement of the Cold War ideology shared by Hawks, Wayne, and many nervous Americans during the 1950s.

See also: Hawks, Howard; Wayne, John; Western, The

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—*Van Roberts*

RISKY BUSINESS. *Risky Business* (1983), writer-director Paul Brickman’s directorial debut, is many things: among them a satire of the capitalist 1980’s; a suburban coming-of-age story; and the film that launched Tom Cruise toward superstardom. Strongly reviewed as more sophisticated than bawdy movies like *Porky’s* (1982) that were finding teen audiences at the time, the picture earned 10 times its modest budget and evoked comparisons to what many considered the emblematic coming-of-age film of its generation, *The Graduate* (1967). *Risky Business* remains a classic cinematic work of the 1980s and one of Cruise’s best movies.

The film’s plot, full of spirited hijinks and serious themes, revolves around Joel Goodsen (Cruise), literally the “good son” raised with all the comforts of the tony Chicago suburbs. He and his friends worry about college admissions, but they also are seriously concerned, as teens often are, about sex. When Joel’s parents take an out-of-town trip, they leave Joel home alone, reassuring him of their trust and reminding him of his long-shot interview with a Princeton admissions officer, which is to take place while they are gone.

However, Joel, counseled by his friend Miles (Curtis Armstrong), begins to “say ‘what the fuck’ ” and take chances; which, Miles argues, will “make your future.” After dancing around the living room to Bob Seger’s “Old Time Rock ‘n’ Roll” in the film’s iconic (and most parodied) scene, Joel begins to break rules: he drives his father’s Porsche against strict orders, and he calls Lana (Rebecca De Mornay), the streetwise prostitute who will make him a man sexually and give him his real education. After Joel accidentally dumps the Porsche into Lake Michigan, he accepts Lana’s suggestion to bring her prostitute friends together with his rich ones in order to earn the money to fix the car. The plan works, but more than that, it reconciles the competing sides of Joel, the good son who will go to the Ivy League school and the hormone-ravaged

teen who wants sex. Joel's interview with the Princeton representative, which mistakenly takes place during a party and appears doomed, actually makes his future by convincing the interviewer that "Princeton can use a guy like Joel."

The film works on several levels and can be interpreted in different ways. Clearly, it satirizes the money-loving 1980's. Joel wants to major in business, and his friends wish to "just make money" in their careers. Joel's main extracurricular activity is "Future Enterprisers," though when Lana calls him a "Little Enterpriser," it is obvious whom the viewer should see as the real businessperson. Furthermore, Joel, whose record is "not really Ivy League" quality, acts excessively and illegally, as many future financiers will, and is rewarded with admission to Princeton. Indeed, if Joel had truly matriculated at Princeton in 1983, he might well have been working for Gordon Gekko, the character from Oliver Stone's *Wall Street* (1987). In this reading, Joel is no longer the good son; rather, he has been corrupted by his no-rules, money-obsessed culture.

However, such a reading seems too dark when the movie is seen as a suburban coming-of-age tale. After all, Joel starts the film as an anxious boy, worried about ruining his future with his natural desire for sex. Indeed, the film's opening scene, his "dream," which is "always the same," is all about his urges ruining his chances at college. But the film also makes it clear that Joel lives in a lifeless suburban culture. Thus, one may ask whether his transformation is corrupting or liberating. After all, while prostitution is illegal, the prostitutes in the movie love these clean suburban boys; Joel's friends, with their sexual urges but limited experience, "need the service" that Lana and her friends provide; and, while Lana is a hooker, she is also Joel's "girlfriend," and there is never a hint that Joel treats her with any disrespect. It may be, then, that as a coming-of-age story, the film reads more positively, as a good boy finding the confidence to take chances and escape a repressive suburban environment.

Risky Business's "corruption or liberation" thematic ambiguity is one among several parallels to *The Graduate*, a film that ends on a strikingly ambiguous, melancholy note. Other commonalities include the generation gap, the protagonists' rule-breaking sexual awakenings, and the lead characters' shared concerns about their futures.

See also: Coming-of-Age Film, The

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—Derek N. Buckaloo

ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW, THE. The film version of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* was released in 1975. Over the last 30 years its growing popularity has made it a phenomenon in the United States; indeed it has become a cult classic (Weinstock, 2008). In 1973, a rock-and-roll show, *The Rocky Horror Show*, opened at the Royal Court's experimental Theatre Upstairs in London. Written by Richard O'Brien,

the stage version opened to great success and was moved twice to accommodate the increasing number of fans who flocked to see it. It moved to the United States when American film and music producer Lou Adler and producer Michael White agreed to open it at Adler's rock club, The Roxy, in Los Angeles (Weinstock, 2008). This is where Twentieth Century-Fox executive Gordon Stulberg saw the show and decided to invest \$1 million to bring it to the big screen. The stage production opened on Broadway before the release of the film, but it was "an unmitigated critical and popular disaster" (Weinstock, 2008). Even though the picture flopped in most areas of the United States when it was released in September 1975, it developed a small but devoted audience that continued to view it—in ritualistic fashion—over and over again. The watershed moment for *Rocky Horror* came when it opened at the Waverly Theatre in New York City's Greenwich Village on April Fool's Day 1976. By the end of the 1970s, the raucous musical had become a pop-culture "must see," with 200 prints of the film circulated in various locations across America (Weinstock, 2008).

Narrated by a criminologist (Charles Gray), the film follows newly engaged couple Brad Majors (Barry Bostwick) and Janet Weiss (Susan Sarandon) as they set out to meet their old science teacher, Dr. Everett V. Scott (Jonathan Adams). On a remote road, in the midst of a driving rainstorm, they experience a flat tire. They decide to set off on foot in order to find help; eventually—and ominously—they spy a castle light off in the distance. When they knock on the door, Brad and Janet are greeted by Riff Raff (Richard O'Brien), the butler, and Magenta (Patricia Quinn), the maid. Invited in, they discover they are unexpected guests at a party thrown by mad scientist Dr. Frank-N-Furter (Tim Curry), a transvestite from the planet Transsexual in the galaxy Transylvania. With his groupie Columbia (Nell Campbell), Frank-N-Furter, on this particular night, unveils his creature, Rocky (Peter Hinwood). Due to their situation, Brad and Janet are forced to spend the night in the eerie castle, where they experience an unsettling world of gender reversal and debauchery. In the finale, the characters come together in an orgy in a swimming pool, which is the fulfillment of a plan devised by Riff Raff and Magenta to return to the planet of Transsexual. While Brad, Janet, and Dr. Scott escape, Riff Raff and Magenta kill Frank-N-Furter and Columbia with a laser that emits "pure anti-matter" before the castle-spaceship lifts off.

On one very important level, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* maintains its distinctly perverse allure because it continues to function as a sort of filmic doppelganger of the truly bizarre ritualistic ceremonies in which its ecstatic audience members participate. On another level, it seems that the film's popularity has much to do with its connection to two sub-cultures within American society: glam-rock, which it embraces, and science fiction cinema, which it mocks. *Rocky Horror* incorporates drama, satiric humor, and gender role ambiguity, for example, three major elements of the 1970s glam-rock subculture (Marchetti, 1982). These elements have become associated with gay street culture, especially with drag, for which Frank-N-Furter has become a kind of cultic poster boy—the character, after all, spends the entire film in lingerie, fishnet

stockings, and platform heels (Marchetti, 1982). In regard to science fiction, the picture-as-phenomenon, unselfconsciously playing on its own outlandish notions of filmic doubling, defines itself, almost vampishly, within what seems to be an orthodox sci-fi framework in the very moment that it consistently acts as a parodic foil to the traditional sci-fi films of the late 1930s (Matheson, 2008). Despite its enigmatic character, however, a generation after it was first released, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, at least for one segment of the cinematic public, shows no sign of losing its oddly powerful appeal.

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—Jennifer K. Morrison

ROGER & ME. *Roger & Me* (1989) is one of Michael Moore’s early documentaries that won international attention. It describes the effects of General Motors’ decision to close plants in Flint, Michigan, where Moore is originally from, and to shift work to less expensive manufacturing sites such as Mexico.

At the outset of the documentary, Michael Moore is hired by *Mother Jones* with headquarters in San Francisco. Although Moore quits his job and leaves his beloved Flint to move from the Midwest to the West Coast, he fails miserably and needs to return. Just the fact that he cannot distinguish between all the different coffee flavors offered in fancy cafés in San Francisco aligns him with the blue-collar workers of Michigan, where he feels he belongs. However, ridiculing the working class is also part of his strategy; he shows regular people as foolish and creates a somewhat superior position of observation for himself.

Moore’s cinematic style is different from other documentary filmmakers for two main reasons: first, he is present as a highly personal narrator and as a sort of investigative reporter who also asks the tough questions of his subjects. He pursues a political agenda in making his films that has been described as overtly critical of mainstream Republican politics. Secondly, his storytelling is cynical and self-reflexive. Bill Nichols (1991) has remarked, "The use of stylistic devices to achieve a reflexive effect runs the risk of manipulating social actors" (71). Nichols detects the possibility that Moore’s characters "will fall into the narrative slots reserved to donors, helpers, and villains" (71). Moore shows the audience how he structures the film and displays openly the

building blocks that constitute this genre. He establishes himself as a specialist on the topic in a comedic way by outlining the legacy of his own family and the automobile industry in Michigan.

Moore has been criticized for his exploitative style of interviewing well-intentioned subjects, such as a middle-aged woman who is economically so depressed that she makes additional money by raising and illegally skinning rabbits in her backyard. The filmmaker also shows his failed attempts to contact Roger B. Smith, the former CEO of General Motors, by going to the GM headquarters and trying to get access to the executive suite. When prompted by the security guards to identify himself, Moore pulls out all kinds of insignificant cards he carries in his wallet but fails to provide proper ID. Next, he stops by the country club that Roger Smith frequently visits and engages the front desk clerk in an awkward description of game and alligator dishes that the wealthy clients at this exclusive resort consume. The description of decadent consumption is contrasted with the documentation of evictions of former GM workers, now laid off, who lose their homes. Moore follows the eviction officer, a sleazy and unlikable man who unsympathetically throws entire families out on the street on Christmas day, along with their plastic Christmas trees.

Roger & Me establishes numerous contrasting scenarios. On the one hand, there is the grim reality of GM workers who are losing their jobs and livelihoods and in some cases end up emotionally damaged, such as one of Michael Moore's childhood friends who experienced a mental breakdown. On the other hand, there are the desperate attempts of an economically deprived town to stay optimistic and generate revenue through wacky attempts to attract tourists. Some performers who grew up in Flint still come to visit but are frequently as shady as some of the people who live in the town they are supposedly trying to revive. Moore gets access with his camera team to several exclusive events such as a garden party where living beings pose as statues for the upper middle class. Ultimately, Moore manages to get inside a GM convention where Roger Smith gives the Christmas Message to his employees while laid-off workers continue to be evicted from their homes in Flint. Moore confronts the chairman and is asked to leave. When he refuses, security guards carry him outside of the convention room.

This physical intervention of the filmmaker is a style that Moore continued to perfect in his subsequent films, such as *Bowling for Columbine* (2002), a documentary about gun control in the United States that was successful abroad; the internationally acclaimed *Fahrenheit 9/11* (2004); and *Sicko* (2007), about the health insurance crisis in the United States.

See also: Moore, Michael; Documentary, The

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—Karen A. Ritzenhoff

ROSEMARY'S BABY. Controversial director Roman Polanski's *Rosemary's Baby* appeared in American theatres in 1968. Based on Ira Levin's popular novel of the same name, the film echoed a number of social, cultural, and religious anxieties that emerged as the 1960s drew to a close. Polanski's film both portrayed and critiqued these anxieties, as *Rosemary's Baby* joined a chorus of voices condemning the traditional family and excoriating religion for what was seen by its enemies as its tendencies toward hypocrisy, superstition, and political corruption.

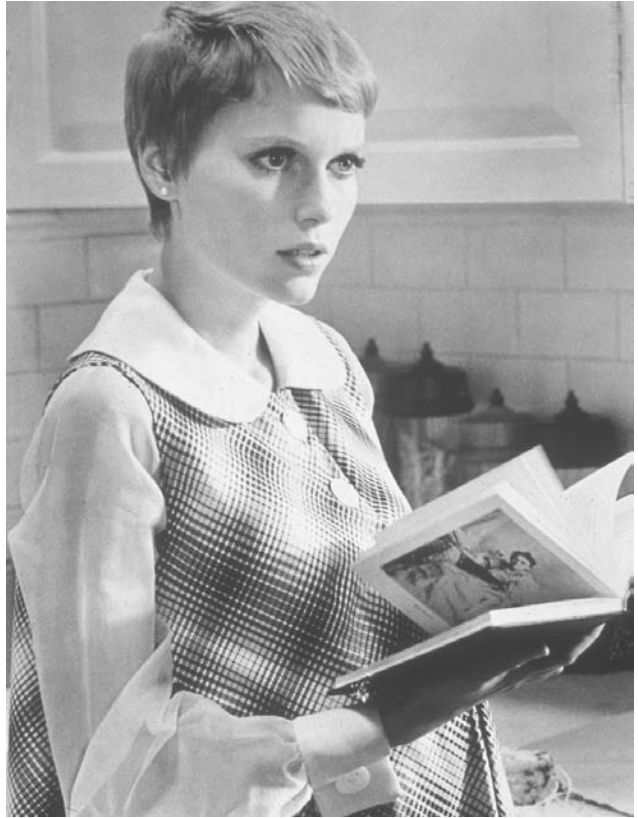
The film opens with the sounds of a comforting lullaby accompanying a camera panning the New York cityscape and stopping over a gothic apartment building (called "the Bramford" in the film but actually the historic Dakota building). A young couple, Guy (John Cassavetes) and Rosemary (Mia Farrow), move into an apartment next door to two elderly, quirky, and garrulous neighbors, and we learn that Guy and Rosemary want to have a child. Polanski managed to keep his late 1960s audience off-balance with these plot points since they all suggested the beginnings of a Doris Day-type romance. The tone of the film quickly becomes dark, however, and we learn that the kindly old couple is part of a large conspiracy of Satanists who have promised Guy success in his acting career in exchange for the use of his wife's womb. In one harrowing scene, Guy drugs and rapes Rosemary while the Satanists watch. The Devil appears to take over Guy's body and impregnate Rosemary. Throughout the rest of the film, the mother-to-be has a growing awareness that her husband and their neighbors are controlling her every movement. Everyone to whom she turns for help appears to be part of the larger conspiracy. She slowly begins to believe that she is giving birth to the Antichrist. At the end of the film, when her child is born, she appears to agree to raise it, even though he has "his father's eyes," which glow a demonic red.

Horror historian David J. Skal views *Rosemary's Baby* as the beginning of a series of films that reflected American society's anxieties over the sexual revolution, the changing nature of parenthood, and the feminist revolution. Polanski released the film eight years after the oral contraceptive Enovid, known popularly as "the Pill," became available and in the same year that Pope Paul VI released the controversial encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, strongly restating the papal condemnation of contraception. Skal further notes that films such as *Rosemary's Baby* began to be released soon after it was revealed that profound birth defects were linked to Thalidomide, a tranquilizer that had been widely prescribed to expectant mothers. Receiving worldwide media attention, the Thalidomide crisis was one of the factors that rekindled the public debate on abortion, a debate that ultimately culminated in the Supreme Court's 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision. In this context, Skal sees *Rosemary's Baby* as "a brilliant metaphorical distillation of the widespread ambivalence and anxiety over sex and reproduction." Significantly, during the 1970s and 1980s, horror films focused on demonic gynecology or monstrous births—such as *It's Alive* (1974), *The Brood* (1979), and most spectacularly, *Alien* (1979)—would become extremely popular (Skal, 2001).

Beyond being read as a cautionary tale that addresses anxieties about sexuality and reproduction, *Rosemary's Baby* can also be understood as a critique of gender oppression and patriarchal mores. A number of critics have noted that the Satanists who impregnate, supervise, and control Rosemary are merely acting out a slightly altered

version of the conservative moral response to 1960s liberalism. Rosemary's effort to escape the clutches of her husband and his satanic allies is an effort to control her body, her sexuality, and the right to bear a child when and if she wishes. The unforgettable end of the film, when Rosemary agrees to care for the child and sees his monstrous eyes, horrifies in part because Rosemary's resistance to the patriarchal pressures pressing in upon her has been turned aside and she quietly accepts her demon-inspired biology as destiny. The frequent references to Catholicism and the use of Catholic symbols further strengthen this theme. As film historian Tony Williams suggests, Polanski sought to show that "Catholicism and Satanism . . . both wish their subjects to be fruitful and multiply" (Williams, 1996).

See also: Polanski, Roman



Mia Farrow, wearing a plaid maternity dress, holds a book in a still from the film *Rosemary's Baby*, directed by Roman Polanski, 1968. (Paramount Pictures/Courtesy of Getty Images)

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—W. Scott Poole

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SAVING PRIVATE RYAN. *Saving Private Ryan* is a 1998 World War II drama about a small group of American infantrymen on a mission in France during the Allied invasion of Normandy. Directed by Steven Spielberg and written by Robert Rodat, it uses characters and situations familiar from 1940s combat films, but overlays them with a distinctly modern sensibility. Along with Tom Brokaw's best-selling book *The Greatest Generation*, published the same year, it became a focal point of popular adulation for the aging veterans of World War II.

The film is framed by scenes set in the present, showing one such veteran on a pilgrimage to the American military cemetery above Omaha Beach—site of the heaviest fighting on D-Day. The old man kneels before a grave marker, the present dissolves into the past, and for the next 23 minutes the viewer is immersed in the struggle to take and hold Omaha Beach on the morning of June 6, 1944. The combat scenes are unrelentingly chaotic, but a company of the 2nd Ranger Battalion, led by Captain Miller (Tom Hanks), gradually becomes the focal point. The beach taken, Miller is assigned a new mission: to locate Private James Francis Ryan—a paratrooper whose three brothers have recently been killed in combat within days of each other—and bring him to safety. Miller chooses five men from his company, and the battalion commander assigns a sixth: a corporal from headquarters who is fluent in French and German.

The small unit thus formed is—like those in countless films made during World War II itself—a collection of stock characters. It includes Reiben (Edward Burns), a wisecracking machine-gunner from Brooklyn; Jackson (Barry Pepper), a pious Southern sharpshooter; Caparzo (Vin Diesel), a tough-looking but soft-hearted Italian American rifleman; and Upham (Jeremy Northam), the bookish translator, who has never seen combat. Miller, the war-weary captain who only wants to go home to his family, and Horvath (Tom Sizemore), the fiercely loyal sergeant who has been at his side for the duration, are—like the melting-pot unit they lead—familiar figures.

The incidents that form the plot of the film are equally familiar. Caparzo, attempting an act of mercy in the midst of a skirmish, is killed by a sniper. Upham, the “new guy,” is gradually accepted into the unit and taught the basic skills of a combat soldier. Miller, at a critical moment, lets his men see a glimpse of the human behind the mask



Tom Sizemore and Tom Hanks during the D-Day landing in Steven Spielberg's 1998 film *Saving Private Ryan*. The movie received seven Academy Award nominations and was a major box-office success. (Paramount/Photofest)

of command he usually wears. The group enjoys a moment of rest in a bombed-out town, listening to recordings of Edith Piaf on a salvaged gramophone. The final battle, in which Miller's small unit joins forces with Ryan's to hold a strategic bridge against a German counterattack, echoes the to-the-last-man climaxes of wartime films such as *Wake Island*, *Sahara*, and especially *Bataan* (all 1943). The battle ends in the best Hollywood fashion, with American reinforcements arriving and routing the Germans just as all hope seems to be lost.

Despite these structural similarities, however, *Private Ryan*'s depiction of the *experience* of war is far removed from that of its 1940s antecedents. War appears—as it does in Vietnam-influenced films from *M*A*S*H* (1970) to *Apocalypse Now* (1979) and *Full Metal Jacket* (1987)—as inherently chaotic and frequently surreal. Death is seldom painless and never clean. The opening combat scenes on Omaha Beach—an unrelenting stream of images of sudden death, agonizing wounds, and paralyzing fear—have the graphic brutality of *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) or *The Wild Bunch* (1969), but not their terrible beauty. Freed from the Production Code that governed the films of the World War II and postwar eras, the soldiers in *Private Ryan* swear often and inventively. When the naive Upham asks what “FUBAR” means, the answer is not the traditional all-audiences version, “Fouled Up Beyond All Recognition,” but the historically accurate “Fucked Up.” Even Wade, the gentle and compassionate medic, becomes profane when the man whose wound he has just stabilized is shot through the head by an unseen German rifleman: “Just give us a fucking chance, you son of a bitch! You son of a fucking cocksucker!”

The soldiers in *Private Ryan* occupy a middle ground between the plaster saints of wartime combat films and the tortured nihilists of *Apocalypse Now* or *Full Metal Jacket*. They have much in common with the men of postwar films like *Battleground* (1949), *Flying Leathernecks* (1951), and *Stalag 17* (1953): recognizably human heroes limited, but not crippled, by their flaws. Miller and his men grow weary, frustrated, and confused as the mission drags on without the prospect of an end. They make questionable decisions and outright mistakes—sometimes fatal ones. They gripe about the war and the army, and debate the wisdom of risking eight men to save one. Private Reiben angrily questions Miller's judgment, crossing over the line of insubordination and edging close to mutiny. Corporal Upham is terrified in combat and fails, during the final battle, to carry out his assigned task of bringing ammunition to the others. Ultimately, however, all the soldiers act with dedication and valor. They do what they do—and most of them give their lives—not to preserve democracy or spare Mrs. Ryan the loss of her sole surviving son, but because they see it as their duty.

Duty is, ultimately, the theme that connects *Saving Private Ryan* to *The Greatest Generation* and, more generally, to the public tributes paid to World War II veterans in the late 1990s. A sense of duty—a willingness to do what society expects, no matter the personal cost—was seen as the World War II generation's defining quality, and Spielberg and Rodat use it to define Miller, Ryan, and the others. Miller, dying at the foot of the bridge, gasps out his last words to young Ryan: "Earn this." The scene dissolves back to the present and the Omaha Beach cemetery where the old man—who we now realize *is* Ryan, kneeling before Miller's grave marker—asks his wife, in a trembling voice: "Tell me I'm a good man . . . tell me I've lived a good life." His implied question—"Have I been worthy of these men's sacrifices?"—is clearly one that Spielberg and Rodat wish the film's audiences, and the nation as a whole, to ask themselves.

See also: Spielberg, Steven; War Film, The

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—A. Bowdoin Van Riper

SCARFACE: THE SHAME OF A NATION (1932). *Scarface* is mysteriously absent from director Martin Scorsese's biopic of Howard Hughes, *The Aviator* (2004), overshadowed instead by the productions of *Hell's Angels* (1930), *The Outlaw* (1943), and Hughes's disastrous ownership of the film studio RKO. Perhaps its absence in *The Aviator* speaks to an anxiety of influence—Scorsese being the contemporary director most associated with the gangster genre—as *Scarface* is not only Hughes's most

acclaimed contribution to Hollywood history but a film that continues to influence today's cultural landscape.

When Hughes began work on *Scarface* in early 1931, and hired Howard Hawks to direct, the gangster cycle was already highly contested and the Hollywood studios under the leadership of Will Hays had begun promising to halt the production of gangster films. The situation had only deteriorated in May when a script was readied with the help of Ben Hecht and W. R. Burnett. William Wellman's *The Public Enemy* (1931) had just hit theaters, and it was being widely reported that *Scarface* was going to deal with the life of real-life gangster boss Al Capone, still at large and nicknamed "Scarface," and to include many infamous events, such as the St. Valentine's massacre. Consequently, Hughes was now strongly encouraged not to make the film by the Hays Office or alternatively to make extensive changes to the script. Although Hughes conceded in the end to numerous suggestions—among other things, inserting rhetorical social messages and having the gangster "turn yellow" at the end—*Scarface* was to become the most explosive gangster film of its time, if not of the studio era altogether. It was extensively censored or banned outright, and marked the point at which the excessively violent gangster pictures of the early 1930s declined precipitously.

In a remarkable performance, Paul Muni plays Tony Camonte, who like so many other film gangsters rises from rags to riches, only to be killed at the end of the film. Throughout, he is amply assisted by his faithful friend Guino Rinaldo (George Raft); that is, until Tony discovers Guino has become involved with his sister Francesca (Ann Dvorak) and promptly shoots him dead. If this gangster plot is mostly typical of the early 1930s cycle and has become a standard of the genre today, it is in the psychology of the characters and their interrelations that the film stands out. The incestual desire between Tony and Francesca is almost explicit, strikingly so for a film made during the early 1930s, while Tony's violent behavior is driven by mania and even some sort of psychosis. However, *Scarface* stands out in more ways than one.

Scarface was an independent production developed and fought for by Howard Hughes and inconceivable as a standard studio production. It has few if any of the social problem elements so typical of the gangster films made by Warner Bros.—the studio that specialized equally in gangsters and social problem films. Even if James Cagney had become legendary for playing "psychotic" gangsters from *The Public Enemy* to *Angels with Dirty Faces* (1938), their psychology is explained sociologically, and it is perhaps not until *White Heat* (1949) that one finds in his work a mania comparable to Muni's in *Scarface*.

The extremity of *Scarface*'s characterization finds its stylistic equivalent in the film's mise-en-scène, its lighting in particular. Much has been made of the 1930s gangster cycle's indebtedness to German Expressionism, but arguably only *Scarface* could convincingly be described as expressionistic. Its opening on a dark street with an eerie light post is suggestive of both German Expressionism and its American heir, the horror film, as is Tony's excessive character and conspicuous scar; the visual "X" leitmotiv; the extensive play with shadows; and, in retrospect, the casting of horror icon Boris Karloff as one of Tony's antagonists. *Scarface* is further distinguished by numerous and sometimes elaborate tracking shots more typical of late silent German cinema than

the classical Hollywood continuity editing of which director Howard Hawks was the quintessential example. Sound effects help to accentuate the violence at the heart of the film, while also emphasizing its ethnic specificity, as many characters speak with a stereotypical Italian accent and in broken English.

More than any other film, *Scarface* contributed to the temporary elimination of gangster films from the American screen; but it was also the one film that had the greatest impact on the development of violence in American movies. And when the gangster genre returned with a vengeance in the New Hollywood era, *Scarface* was at its center, culminating with Brian De Palma's remake in 1983, the latter also creating something of an uproar and becoming yet another cornerstone of popular American cinema.

See also: Gangster Film, The; Hays Office and Censorship, The; Hawks, Howard

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—Björn Nordfjörd

SCHINDLER'S LIST. *Schindler's List*, adapted from Thomas Keneally's book *Schindler's Ark* (titled *Schindler's List* in the United States), dramatizes the story of Oskar Schindler (Liam Neeson), a womanizing German industrialist who employed Jewish slave labor in his enamelware factory outside Krakow, Poland during the Nazi occupation. As the Nazi noose tightens, the initially self-centered protagonist becomes increasingly committed to the laborers and their families. Together with Jewish book-keeper Itzhak Stern (Ben Kingsley), Schindler conspires against SS commander Amon Göth (Ralph Fiennes) to save the lives of some 1,100 Jews. By the end of the film, as the Jewish survivors are liberated by Soviet troops in the present-day Czech Republic, a penniless Schindler and his wife flee westward, carrying little more than a letter explaining Schindler's efforts on behalf of the Jews.

Schindler's List appeared in 1993, amidst the flurry of 50th-anniversary Holocaust commemorations and World War II remembrances that shaped both popular and academic culture in the mid-1990s. The film won seven Oscars, including Best Picture, Best Director, and Best Original Score (John Williams), and became a lightning rod for discussions on the appropriate way to remember and reproduce Holocaust history. Supporters emphasized the film's attention to historical detail and contextualization of iconic imagery, noting Spielberg's quest for his own Jewish roots and his own description of *Schindler's List* as a cinematic memorial to the millions murdered by the Nazis.



Director Steven Spielberg and actor Liam Neeson on the set of *Schindler's List* in 1993. (Universal/The Kobal Collection)

Detractors condemned what they saw as a reprehensible attempt to dramatize and profit from an act of terror that defies artistic representation.

Film critics often compared *Schindler's List* with Claude Lanzmann's 1985 documentary *Shoah*. While both films draw on the memories and stories of Holocaust survivors, *Schindler's List* attempts to contextualize historical events and personal memories, dramatizing a specific chapter of the Holocaust and challenging dichotomies of good and evil, victim and perpetrator. Some reviewers accused Spielberg of humanizing the wrong people (i.e., the German perpetrators), reinforcing cultural stereotypes, objectifying the female body, and sensationalizing mass murder, but most appreciated his effort to balance the enormity of the Holocaust with an acknowledgment of individual agency. The final scene, in which both the actors and actual Holocaust survivors climb a hill toward Schindler's grave, reminds viewers that *Schindler's List*, while directed by a master of fantasy, depicts the experiences and memories of real people.

Technically, *Schindler's List* exemplifies late twentieth-century realism, blurring the boundaries among documentary, drama, and art film. Unlike Spielberg's earlier blockbusters, such as *Jaws* (1975), *E.T.* (1982), and *Jurassic Park* (1993), *Schindler's List* engages real-life crises, and embraces narrative complexity; scenes of graphic violence contrast with images of everyday life under Nazi rule. With the exception of a brief introductory scene and fleeting glimpses of a young girl in a red coat, the film is shot in black and white, a decision that was both lauded as emphasizing the bleakness of the subject and criticized as attempting to claim historical authenticity. Numerous

point-of-view shots convey the perspective of individual witnesses to public acts of terror in the Krakow ghetto and at Auschwitz, scenes which are juxtaposed against images of opulent dinner parties and the comparatively normal home lives of Göth and Schindler. Heroes, villains, and victims are all depicted as multifaceted individuals whose actions are informed, but not predetermined, by the Nazi regime.

Although not particularly innovative in theme, story, or cinematic technique, *Schindler's List* marked several turning points for American film. Spielberg's own work shifted from a fantasy genre noted primarily for special effects to more serious topics. A similar shift can be seen throughout the film industry, resulting in the release of numerous Oscar-winning historical dramas in the 1990s, as well as greater collaboration between film professionals and trained historians. More broadly, the heated, well-publicized debates about the appropriateness and truth value of *Schindler's List* helped bridge not only the traditional divide between elite and popular culture, but also between academic and lay audiences.

See also: Spielberg, Steven; War Film, The

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—Kimberly A. Redding

SEARCHERS, THE. John Ford's *The Searchers* (1956) was based on Alan Le May's *The Avenging Texan*, a serial published in 1954 in the *Saturday Evening Post*. Considered by many to be Ford's masterpiece and one of the finest westerns ever produced, it recounts the story of Ethan Edwards (John Wayne), a Confederate veteran who returns home to his brother's ranch on the Texas frontier in 1868. His three-year absence since the end of the Civil War is a matter of some concern to his brother Aaron (Walter Coy) and sister-in-law Martha (Dorothy Jordan). Captain Samuel Johnston Clayton (Ward Bond), the leader of a local group of Texas Rangers, even implies that Ethan may be responsible for a string of crimes. For his part, Ethan is happy to be reunited with his nephew Ben and nieces Lucy and Debbie, although he is bothered to see Martin Pawley (Jeffrey Hunter), a young man with partial Cherokee ancestry. (Ethan saved Martin from a Comanche raid when Martin was a child, and Martin subsequently grew up in Aaron's household.) The possibility of a peaceful homecoming is shattered when news of a cattle raid draws the local men and Rangers out into the wilds. The raid turns out to be a ruse engineered by Comanche warriors led by a chief

named Scar (Henry Brandon) who slaughter Aaron, Martha, and Ben. Ethan and Martin then spend five years searching for the kidnapped Lucy and Debbie.

The Searchers explores the meaning of masculinity and the civilizing potential of family through the juxtaposition of the different experiences of younger and older men. Similar concerns appear in other westerns of the 1950s and 1960s, including, *The Tin Star* (1957), *The Magnificent Seven* (1960), *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962), *Hud* (1963), and *El Dorado* (1967). In *The Searchers*, these themes are embodied in the contrasting attitudes and experiences of Ethan and Martin. Domesticity can be considered the broader of the two themes: the film begins with the image of a door opening and ends with another one closing. We see Ethan for the first time through the first door, but unlike Martin, he remains outside—ever the wandering loner—after the second has closed.

Although David Thomson has accused Ford of invalidating the western as a form, relying on “ clichéd panoramas,” and creating films whose collective message is “trite, callous, and evasive,” even he has acknowledged that *The Searchers* is a moving film that treats its subject seriously (Thomson, 2002). *The Searchers* has been described as being morally ambiguous (Coyne, 1997), especially in relation to its treatment of race and racism, and Ethan Edwards has been called both Ford’s first antihero (Buscombe, 1988) and a racist (Coyne, 1997). Such characters were increasingly common in westerns of the 1950s, as were the treatment of racial prejudice and rape and the presentation of more graphic violence (Loy, 2004). In these ways, *The Searchers* was very much a reflection of contemporary American society and culture (Loy, 2004). Scholars do not agree, however, on how to interpret the film’s stance toward Native Americans. R. Philip Loy, for example, sees it as anti-Indian (Loy, 2004). Contrarily, Kathryn Kalinak argues that the sheer amount of music associated with Indians in the film—stereotypical though some of it may be—and the use of folk songs from the American South combine to form a complex musical world that demands a nuanced reading of the film’s treatment of race, miscegenation, and violence (Kalinak, 2007). Kalinak has also noted that several disintegrated nations—the Confederacy, the Republic of Texas, the Spanish New World, and the Comanche people—haunt the narrative. This is reflected sonically through the interruption of songs (such as “Shall We Gather at the River?”) throughout the film (Kalinak, 2007).

The influence of *The Searchers* on American popular culture has been widespread. Ethan Edwards’s catchphrase “That’ll be the day” inspired a 1957 Buddy Holly song, while directors such as Martin Scorsese, Steven Spielberg, and George Lucas have borrowed from the film’s imagery and themes (Fagen, 2003).

See also: Ford, John; Western, The

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—Stanley C. Pelkey II

SERPICO. Released at the end of 1973, Sidney Lumet's *Serpico* captured an America struggling with a crisis of identity: weary of ineffective leftist political activism, yet distrustful of government authority after stories of local and federal corruption became increasingly common. Adapted from the Peter Maas biography of the same name, the film traces the experiences of New York City police officer Frank Serpico as he works to expose police racketeering from 1967 to 1972. Considered a misfit by both his colleagues and the members of his own private-life community, Serpico fully embraces the antiauthoritarian sentiments of the 1960s counterculture while maintaining an unwavering allegiance to the law and order sensibilities of Nixonian America. Winning a Golden Globe for Al Pacino's lead performance and receiving Academy-Award nominations for Pacino and screenwriters Waldo Scott and Norman Wexler, *Serpico* remains an engaging example of Lumet's ability to depict the contradictions that defined America in the early 1970s.

Deviating from the linear style typical of Lumet's films, *Serpico* is primarily structured as a flashback, beginning with Serpico's rush to the emergency room after he is the victim of a suspicious shooting during a drug bust. Having established the fact that Serpico has developed a less than stellar reputation within the NYPD, the film goes on to explore his early years as a first-generation Italian American patrol cop. Driven to become the best cop he can be, Serpico enrolls in police forensics programs, audits New York University courses, learns Spanish, and cultivates an interest in ballet. Ironically, his inherent curiosity and work ethic, coupled with his adoption of a counterculture lifestyle, eventually make him a pariah among his NYPD partners. Bored with his work and uneasy over his squad commander's accusations that he is a "weirdo cop" and a homosexual, Serpico approaches Captain Inspector McClain (Biff McGuire) and requests a transfer. He fares no better with the members of his new unit, however, as he refuses the free meals and cash payoffs that his colleagues readily accept. Serpico's actions, considered by other cops as not only unorthodox but somehow unethical, give rise to a great deal of hostility. Increasingly marginalized, and beginning to fear for his life, Serpico turns informant with the help of McClain, his corruption-loathing superior; Inspector Lombardo (Ed Grover); and internal affairs officer Bob Blair (Tony Roberts). Although he survives being shot and testifies before a specially organized session of the Knapp Commission, he finally becomes disillusioned with police work. Rejecting the highly coveted detective's shield that he has dreamed of wearing, Serpico resigns from the force. Lumet ends the film with an alienated Serpico standing on a corner with his sheepdog, as title cards explain that he now leads a transient life "somewhere in Switzerland."

Despite clearly sympathizing with his lead character, Lumet refused to present audiences with a sanitized version of Serpico's life. Though his adoption of the



Al Pacino, as officer Frank Serpico, waits in a hallway before apprehending drug dealers in a scene from Sidney Lumet's police corruption drama *Serpico*, 1973. (Paramount Pictures/Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

counterculture ideals of the 1960s allowed him to define a certain foundational ethic, it also seemed to foster in him a somewhat obsessive desire to expose corruption within the NYPD and an inability to entertain the possibility of marrying and having a family. It may be argued that in presenting Serpico as a character unable to succeed either within the legal system or within the nuclear family, the film addresses the precarious status of urban Italian American males in a 1970s America marked by white flight and deindustrialization. Retaining immigrant stigmas despite wider representation in prominent social positions and in Hollywood film, working-class, Italian American males tended to remain tethered to two cultural roles: the neighborhood beat cop, such as Serpico, or, ironically, the underworld crime

figure, such as those played by Pacino in the *Godfather* trilogy, *Dick Tracy*, and *Donnie Brasco*. Sadly, unfulfilled as a beat cop and abhorring the corrupt activities of his predominantly Italian colleagues, Serpico is unable to locate a place for himself within American culture, ultimately rejecting the nation altogether.

See also: Lumet, Sidney; Pacino, Al

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—Jerod Ra'Del Hollyfield

SEX, LIES, AND VIDEOTAPE. Steven Soderbergh's *Sex, Lies and Videotape* captured the prestigious Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival in 1989. Along with other independent films, such as Atom Egoyan's *Speaking Parts* (1989) and *Family Viewing* (1987) and David Cronenberg's *Videodrome* (1982), Soderbergh's film focused on viewer fascination with video recording, especially in ways that radically reshaped the meaning of public and private space and relationships of power between men and women. Ostensibly a film that instantiates the idea of the "male gaze," as Soderbergh, the male director, records his male protagonist recording his female subjects, the film tropes this notion by placing the video recorder in the hands of a woman who turns her gaze back on the men who seek to control her.

Sex, Lies, and Videotape tells the story of Graham Dalton, played with eerie charm by James Spader, who interviews attractive women about their private lives while he films them. He is in control of the camera, acting to construct the imagistic reality that he is recording. As Laura Mulvey suggested in her seminal 1975 essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," the male observer is the active, dominant partner during moments of scopophilia, whereas the female subject remains passive. Significantly, in a key scene in the film, the camera, and thereby the balance of power, changes hands, when one of Graham's subjects, Ann Bishop Mullany (Andie MacDowell), turns the camera on the filmmaker himself. Stripped of his videographic means of defense, Graham becomes increasingly insecure and self-conscious. As Mulvey suggested, these scenes expose the male gaze for what it is: an expression of patriarchal power that is subject to destabilization when its boundaries are transgressed. Forced to reveal his own sexual inadequacies, Graham develops a perverse visual connection with Ann, who is unhappily married to his college friend John Mullany (Peter Gallagher), a pathological womanizer and liar.

Learning of the unusual relationship between his wife and his friend, John, who has been competing with Graham for years, enters Graham's apartment and discovers a video recording on which Ann has made clear her feelings about her sexually unsatisfactory marriage. Although John has been continually unfaithful to Ann, going so far as to carry on a sexual relationship with her sister Cynthia (Laura San Giacomo), he cannot abide his wife's act of carnal betrayal and divorces her. As the film draws to a close, we learn that John is ultimately punished for his sins by losing his prized position at a prestigious law firm, while it seems that Graham and Ann, with the aid of their video mediator, will eventually be able to negotiate their way through their psychological minefields and end up together.

Demonstrating the potential of independent films to attract large audiences, *Sex, Lies, and Videotape* appeared to seduce viewers by making them into socially acceptable voyeurs. Blurring the boundaries between public and private, and between domains of male and female power, Soderbergh plays on the appeal of the home video market by creating a film that explores complex notions of narrative authenticity.

See also: Feminist Film Criticism; Male Gaze, The; Women in Film

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—Karen A. Ritzenhoff

SHADOWS. As John Cassavetes's directorial debut, *Shadows* (1961) is remarkable both for its bold portrayal of the complex social issues of 1950s American society and for its mythologized role at the start of the experimental, independent filmmaking tradition. *Shadows* grew from cinematic theories that emerged in the same New York ethos that inspired Charlie Parker's bebop jazz and the Beat literature of Jack Kerouac; as such, it shares a developing rejection of capitalist establishment values and a vital exploration of the visceral emotions and gritty realities of modern urban life. *Shadows* began in Cassavetes's acting workshop as an experiment with his best students where he assigned roles that they used to improvise scenes. These experiments were so effective that Cassavetes soon planned a film project; by appealing for donations, he freed his creative vision from the studio system and became an originator of independent film. Ironically, unable to make *Shadows* a purely improvisational film, he added scenes that were carefully scripted.

Much of the film *is* improvised, however, and as such it tends toward raw emotion and natural reaction instead of carefully plotted narrative development. The central characters are African American siblings of mixed parentage living in New York. The dark-skinned elder brother, Hugh, heads the family; his younger siblings Bennie and Lelia are mixed race, and so light-skinned that they often "pass" for white. This inter-relational dynamic frames the film's exploration of a broad spectrum of social concerns, including race, miscegenation, feminism, family, and love. Though narrative threads connect the siblings, at its most basic level the film seeks to record the quotidian lives of this set of sophisticated, urbane, creative African Americans. Although it does not address them directly, *Shadows* resonates with the issues of the nascent civil rights movement of the 1950s—*Brown v. Board of Education*; the Montgomery bus boycott; the Freedom Riders; and the Civil Rights Bills of 1957 and 1960.

Early in the film, we find Bennie in a club, isolated and imperious, seemingly unable to reconcile the racial issues that plague him, and America. Significantly, a central conflict occurs when Lelia, who is young and intelligent but somewhat naive, meets a white man named Tony at a party and sleeps with him soon afterward. Certainly Lelia's willingness to lose her virginity with a man she hardly knows would have upset mainstream audiences during the 1950s, but so too would the portrayal of an interracial sexual relationship. The crisis comes when Tony meets Hugh; thinking that Lelia is white, Tony is shocked when he meets her dark-skinned older brother and realizes that he has slept with a mixed-race woman. Lelia is disturbed not because she has slept with a white man, but because she cannot conceive that race should even be an

issue: she sees herself as a vibrant and artistic individual, not as a racialized object subject to a (white) man's approval.

Tony, like so many white Americans, then and now, prides himself on being a progressive thinker; and later, once he has explored his feelings, seems honestly appalled by his rejection of Lelia because of her mixed heritage. For the first time, it seems, he understands his own latent racism and feels genuinely repentant. He goes to Lelia's apartment to rectify things but must entrust Bennie with an emotional message: "I realize now there's no difference between us. . . . Just tell her that Tony said, 'I'm sorry.'" Bennie's unsympathetic laughter following Tony's departure reveals how much difference he knows really does exist between his sister and Tony.

At the end of the film, Cassavetes once again locates Bennie in a club. Still angry and still isolated, he eventually walks off into the night seeking a "normal life." His shadows remain, however, insuring that his desire for normality will not be easily consummated.

See also: Independent Film, The

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—Kelly MacPhail

SHAFT. The NAACP gave up trying to persuade Hollywood to cast more African Americans in films and television shows in 1963, ultimately resorting to legal measures and economic sanctions to effect changes. As a result of these efforts, blacks began to appear in both major and minor screen and television roles in greater numbers. Actor Sidney Poitier, for instance, emerged in the late 1960s as the first truly popular African American actor and qualified as an example of "the model integrationist hero." By the 1970s, African Americans had turned up not only in ghetto-themed movies but also in every other film genre and in diverse settings on television shows.

Eventually, the pendulum swung from one extreme to the other, as racist depictions of African Americans as subservient Sambo characters—prevalent before the 1960s—gave way to the portrayal of blacks as Superspades in films representative of what came to be called blaxploitation pictures. The brief golden age of blaxploitation movies stretched from 1970 through 1975, with these pictures targeted primarily at black audiences. Blaxploitation heroes and heroines displayed a social and political consciousness—a street ethic that allowed them to work within the system but also to do whatever it took to improve the African American community. Not surprisingly,



Scene from the 1970 film *Shaft*, starring Richard Roundtree. Directed by Gordon Parks, 1971. (GAB Archive/Redferns)

blaxploitation heroes often clashed with whites; but filmmakers—both white and black—refused to depict whites in strictly monolithic terms. Good whites and bad whites jockeyed for prominence in these films. Although one NAACP official described blaxploitation as just “another form of cultural genocide,” African American audiences flocked to see these pictures.

Based on a novel by Chester Himes, director Ossie Davis’s urban crime thriller *Cotton Comes to Harlem* (1970), about two African American NYPD cops, Coffin Ed Johnson (Raymond St. Jacques) and Gravedigger Jones (Godfrey Cambridge), paved the way for the production of other films in the short-lived movement. When the film premiered, critics did not categorize *Cotton* as blaxploitation. Interestingly, the term “black exploitation” first appeared in print in the August 16, 1972, issue of the show business newspaper *Variety*, in which the NAACP Beverly Hills-Hollywood branch president Junius Griffin coined the phrase to describe the derogatory impact these films had on the African American community. Later, the phrase black exploitation was abbreviated as blaxploitation.

Two films that historians point to as instrumental in shaping the movement were Melvin Van Peebles’s *Sweet Sweetback’s Baadasssss Song* (1971) and Gordon Parks’s *Shaft* (1971). In his film, Peebles expanded the narrative content of Davis’s *Cotton Comes to Harlem* by adding sequences devoted to sex and violence, and *Sweetback’s*

success—especially with black audiences—triggered the blaxploitation craze, one of the most profitable in cinematic history. Major Hollywood film studios rushed to produce similar films. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, for instance, followed *Sweetback's* success with their adaptation of Ernest Tidyman's literary private eye thriller *Shaft* (1971).

Shaft starred model-turned-actor Richard Roundtree as a sort of latter-day, ultrahip version of Humphrey Bogart's Sam Spade character from *The Maltese Falcon*. As a detective movie, the picture observed all the conventions of the genre. The action opens with the trench-coated protagonist wearing out shoe leather in Manhattan to the tune of Isaac Hayes's evocative, Oscar-winning rendition of "Theme from Shaft." The lyrics of the song provided a thumbnail sketch of the hero's persona: private detective John Shaft is "the cat who won't cop out when there's danger all about." An infamous Harlem crime lord, Bumpy Jonas (Moses Gunn), loosely based on real-life criminal Bumpy Johnson, hires Shaft to locate his missing daughter Marcy. Eventually, Shaft discovers that the Italian mafia has abducted her and he assembles a motley crew of black militants to help him rescue Marcy.

Although it became an instant success, African American leaders and film critics excoriated the film for perpetuating the stereotype of young black males as violent and sexually promiscuous. Ironically, some critics complained not about the film's stereotypical characterization of its protagonist, but about the fact that *Shaft* simply substituted blacks in roles that were traditionally played by whites. Yet, for all the criticism that came its way, the picture was wildly popular, ultimately spawning two sequels—*Shaft's Big Score* (1972) and *Shaft in Africa* (1973)—and later, a short-lived television series. It also paved the way for the release of other significant blaxploitation offerings, including *Super Fly* (1972), *Cleopatra Jones* (1973), and *Foxy Brown* (1974), the latter two starring female action stars Tamara Dobson and Pam Grier.

See also: African Americans in Film

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—Van Roberts

SHANE. Long regarded as one of the classic westerns, George Stevens's *Shane* embodies nearly all of the central myths of this genre, and does so with a simplicity and dramatic economy that distinguish this film from its numerous predecessors. Based on the 1949 novel by Jack Schaefer, adapted for the screen by A. B. Guthrie Jr., *Shane* tells the story of a handsome drifter and ex-gunfighter, of shadowy origins, who frees a small frontier town in Wyoming from the violent and tyrannical rule of the Ryker family, and of its irascible patriarch, Rufus Ryker.



Scene still from *Shane*, starring Alan Ladd (left) and Van Heflin, 1953. (Paramount/The Kobal Collection)

Schaefer's novel is set in 1889, but the conflict between ranchers and homesteaders that lies at the heart of *Shane* is more nearly reflective of the Wyoming range wars of the 1890s, and Stevens draws extensively on the history of this period to give his movie the look and feel of the late nineteenth-century frontier. Shot on location in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, against the majestic backdrop of the Grand Tetons, Stevens clearly hoped to capture some of the grandeur of the natural setting for his drama of second chances and the domestication of the Wild West.

In place of the first-person narration that Schaefer employs throughout his novel, Stevens adopts a subtler and more cinematic device of foregrounding the impressions of eight-year-old Joey Starrett, as he responds to the mysterious stranger in his midst, a man in buckskins known only by one name, "Shane." In what became his signature role, Alan Ladd portrays Shane as a soft-spoken yet potentially menacing figure, who rides out of the mountains one day in search of a new life and finds it, however briefly, within the Starrett family circle. Joe Starrett (Van Heflin) and his wife Marion (Jean Arthur) are drawn to Shane's quiet manner and obvious helpfulness, though it is Marion whose connection to Shane is deepest, and (in spite of herself) clearly romantic. And though Joe insists that he doesn't want Shane to "fight his battles for him," that is precisely the role Shane ultimately plays, as the Ryker brothers, determined to drive the homesteaders from "their" land, hire a gunslinger from Cheyenne named Jack Wilson (Jack Palance) to frighten the few homesteading families that remain into leaving. Shane's shootout with Wilson is one of the most realistically

filmed gunfights in the history of a genre that often glorifies gun culture, but it also serves as a sobering climax to a film that seriously weighs the moral costs of violence. Shane's confession to Joey that there's "no going back from a killing" captures perfectly both the poignancy and the tragic heroism of Shane's doomed attempt to leave his gunfighting days behind him.

The actual shooting of *Shane* was completed in 1951, but for the next year and a half Stevens edited and reedited his film until it was released in 1953, leaving Paramount Studios in doubt that the film would ever be released or turn a profit. The film's subsequent success—it was nominated for six Academy Awards and won for Best Color Cinematography—confirmed Stevens's reputation as a director (and in this case, producer as well) who would settle for nothing less than the best his crew was capable of. Cinematographer Lloyd Griggs shot the movie in a widescreen ratio that was later adapted to a CinemaScope format, and the expansive horizontality of the projected screen image was reinforced throughout by Griggs's use of long shots, emphasizing the expanse of the Wyoming grazing lands where much of the action takes place. In an effort to achieve as much dramatic realism as possible, Stevens dressed his actors in period costumes, even to the extent of showing his audience a close-up of a Sears and Roebuck catalog from the 1890s, and having them comment on changing fashions. But in sharp contrast to other western movies of the '50s (and particularly those on TV), *Shane* never glamorizes violence, nor does it unambiguously identify masculinity with the gun. *Shane* is one of the few films set on the western frontier that depicts farmers doing real labor—splitting logs, clearing stumps, and fixing fence posts—as opposed to cowboys on horseback, forever pursuing outlaws in black hats.

However, *Shane* is not deficient in western iconography, nor does it seriously challenge the heroic narrative of westward expansion. Shane himself exists at just one remove from the knight-errant of the romance tradition, and his willingness to sacrifice his happiness (and perhaps even his life) to secure the well-being of a community that only reluctantly accepts him, resonated powerfully with audiences that had begun to demand more of this genre than the familiar "horse opera." Victor Young's soaring score and A. B. Guthrie's often understated dialogue, along with some of the finest screen performances of this decade, will likely ensure *Shane's* place in the hierarchy of western filmmaking for years to come.

See also: Western, The

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—Robert Platzner

SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION, THE. Frank Darabont's *The Shawshank Redemption* (1994) tells a simple story—almost too simple for contemporary audiences who frequently seek films with adrenaline-like pacing, flashy violence, and soundtracks set to hipster music—but in its simplicity it cuts to the core of some of life's most complex and enduring themes. Among them are hope and friendship. It's also about humanity, which is unusual for a movie that deals almost uniquely with convicted prisoners in a Maine penitentiary. But Darabont does not allow his characters to be defined as criminals; instead, he sees these ostensibly dangerous, misguided misfits for what they truly are: human beings. The warden might not see them as such, nor might the prison guards, but to the audience they become honest, fragile characters who struggle to maintain hope, to be free, and most of all to be human.

Based on Stephen King's novella "Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption," the film chronicles the prison life of Andy Dufresne (Tim Robbins), a banker who is convicted for killing his wife and her lover in cold blood. The narrative is told from the perspective of Shawshank's resident conman, Ellis "Red" Redding (Morgan Freeman), who quickly befriends Andy, striking a bond thicker than the fortified walls, barbed wire, and rusted fencing that surrounds the facility. Through Red's narration, the film unfolds as a series of episodes that depict Andy chafing under the constrictions imposed on him by his surroundings, and the quiet encouragement his disobedience imparts to his friends. As an educated banker, Andy uses his skills to subvert the realities of his environment: he offers his financial services to the head guard in return for some beers to be shared among his comrades; after procuring a large collection of used books and records for the prison, he expands the library and begins administering high school equivalency tests for inmates. All of these subtle cases of defiance build to the grand act of insubordination: Andy's escape. But that is merely a plot point. The real liberation occurs not for Andy but for Red. Andy suffers in prison, but he suffers more as a result of his refusal to acquiesce; Red, by contrast, suffers *because* he acquiesces, yet by the end of the film, through his relationship with Andy, he learns how to be free.

"Prison is no fairy-tale world," states Red, and he is correct. Darabont reveals prison life to be violent, repressive, and dehumanizing; yet he does so dispassionately, never reveling in its abuses. Nor is he concerned with traditional questions of guilt versus innocence. Andy is innocent, Red is not, but none of that matters because Darabont sees his characters as humans first and prisoners second. This is a motif he repeated in his 1999 prison drama *The Green Mile*, and it works. It is also instructive. Just as historians of the 1960s and 1970s illustrated the necessity of uncovering the agency of working people, bondspersons, and women, *Shawshank* raises important points concerning how scholars might approach convicted persons in their studies—that is, with openness and honesty, not nihilism and prejudice. This seems especially pertinent in the post-9/11 world where the troubling revelations of abuse and torture at Abu Ghraib prison and Guantanamo Bay have generated fierce debates about the treatment of prisoners.

The emotional power *Shawshank* generates, however, is not limited to its narrative of prison life. The film's emphasis on humanity and hope are universal themes

designed to touch audiences on a multitude of levels, which is a primary reason for its enduring success. Frequently regarded as one of the best films of its time, it is surprising to think that, despite garnering seven Academy Award nominations *Shawshank* was a commercial failure. Today it stands alongside other treasured classics, including *Citizen Kane* and *It's A Wonderful Life*, as an overlooked film saved by the reverence of a few dedicated followers. Like these works, *Shawshank* not only entertains its audience, it inspires and provokes them, as well.

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—Ryan J. Kirkby

SHINING, THE. Released in 1980 and starring Jack Nicholson, *The Shining* is a horror film directed by Stanley Kubrick. Kubrick and screenwriter Diane Johnson adapted the screenplay from Stephen King's 1978 bestseller of the same name. Nicholson plays tortured writer Jack Torrence, who, looking to earn a little extra money while working on his novel, agrees to act as the off-season caretaker at the Overlook Hotel in Colorado. Enthusiastic about the appointment, Jack packs up his wife, Wendy (Shelley Duvall), and their son, Danny (Danny Lloyd), and the family heads off on their winter adventure.

Arriving at the Overlook on the day it is shutting down for the season, the family is taken on a tour of the facility by the hotel's director. As they move through the cavernous spaces of the hotel, the group encounters the hotel's aging chef, Dick Halloran (Scatman Crothers), who offers to take Danny down to the kitchen for some ice cream. While sharing his treat with Mr. Halloran, Danny reveals to him that he is afraid of the hotel, particularly room 237. Mr. Halloran surprises Danny by communicating with the boy telepathically; he also tries to reassure him by telling Danny that his psychic abilities are really a gift, what Halloran calls "shining." Before they leave each other, Halloran warns Danny to stay out of the hotel's abandoned rooms, especially room 237.

Danny's curiosity gets the better of him and he enters the room, where he meets a ghost woman. Jack also ventures into the forbidden room, encountering the same woman, but lies to Wendy about his experience. Jack's madness accelerates as his writing goes nowhere and his supernatural visions increase at an alarming rate. Wendy witnesses this madness when she discovers his manuscript with the words "All work and no play make Jack a dull boy" repeating throughout the pages. When she confronts him, he threatens her. Wendy knocks him unconscious with a baseball bat and drags him to the kitchen's walk-in freezer, locking it behind her. The ghost of the Overlook's



Jack Nicholson in Stanley Kubrick's film *The Shining*, 1980. (Photofest)

previous winter caretaker, Delbert Grady (Philip Stone), releases Jack and sends him after his family. In the bedroom, Danny writes "Redrum" on the door to try to warn his mother. Seeing the word reflected in a mirror, Wendy realizes her son has really written "Murder!," and she rushes to save Danny. Jack hacks his way to her through a bathroom door with an axe and sticks his face through the wood, yelling, "Heeeeeeeere's Johnny!" Wendy and Danny escape through the hotel's hedge maze, taking Dick's abandoned vehicle, leaving Jack to freeze to death. The final shot of the film is a photograph of the hotel dated July 4, 1921, with a young and smiling Jack front row and center.

The Shining proved to be a great commercial success, but was met with mixed reviews from critics. Roger Ebert concluded that the film was decidedly ambiguous, and that it was diffi-

cult to connect with any of the characters. Stephen King publicly disapproved of the picture, arguing that though it was a solid film, it failed to address the major themes of alcoholism and the disintegration of the family that were prevalent in his novel. King also felt that the possession of Jack in the earlier parts of the film denied "the entire tragedy of his downfall."

Of all the film adaptations of King's work, *The Shining* has received the most critical and scholarly attention. Tony Magistrale argues that *The Shining* receives more praise than any other Kubrick film or King adaptation because it must be "read carefully, in a process that is akin to experiencing a poem or viewing a complex oil painting." The subtle nuances of its scenes make it "too artistic to work as a horror film," but "whatever Kubrick sacrifices in visceral or psychological terror, he more than rewards in visual evocative brilliance." Setting the horror in a place of intimacy (the bedroom) allows the characters to expose greater levels of vulnerability, as those places are usually the most private of all spaces, demonstrating that terror comes not from the shadows but from well-lighted areas associated with intimacy and trust (Magistrale, 2003).

The film remains one of the greatest horror pictures of all time. After reconsideration many years later, Ebert added it to his series of "Great Movie" reviews in 2006,

and it is on the American Film Institute's (AFI) Top 100 list. Stephen King, though he had softened his views on the Kubrick adaptation, produced his own TV miniseries of *The Shining* in 1997, which starred Steven Weber as Jack. Most recently, Jack's axe from the film helped to break a Hollywood auction record, adding to a \$7.8 million dollar profit made by a four-day Hollywood auction.

See also: Horror Film, The; Kubrick, Stanley

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—Jennie Woodard

SHREK SERIES, THE. *Shrek* (2001), directed by Andrew Adamson and Vicky Jensen, is the first in a series of American computer-animated films (*Shrek*; *Shrek 2*; *Shrek the Third*) about a grumpy, green ogre (voiced by Mike Myers) with certain heroic qualities. The film was based on the book *Shrek!* (1990), by American cartoonist



The animated cast of the 2001 film *Shrek*. Shown (from left) are Donkey (voice: Eddie Murphy), Shrek (voice: Mike Myers), Princess Fiona (voice: Cameron Diaz), and Lord Farquaad of Duloc (voice: John Lithgow). (Photofest)

William Steig, and established Dreamworks Animation as one of the leaders in the world of animated motion pictures. Before this, Disney's Pixar films had dominated the scene. Recognized for its appeal to a wide spectrum of viewers, *Shrek* is an example of narrative and technical innovation. The postmodern features in the film include the subversion of traditional fairy-tale characters and the parodic treatment of film and television culture. The 3D computer animation creates the illusion of visual depth and a paradoxical "realism" in the presentation of these fairy-tale characters. The *Shrek* phenomenon has also gone well beyond the film itself through merchandising efforts, most of which are designed to appeal to the child consumer; the green ogre has been reproduced in everything from *Shrek* backpacks to cans of *Shrek* pasta, and the visibility of this character shows no sign of fading away.

As a computer-animated movie, *Shrek* is certainly reflective of recent artistic and technical developments in computer technology (Hopkins, 2004); however, many basic elements of the storyline are consistent with the narrative patterns of the past, including the tales adapted by Disney early on to the medium of film (e.g., *Sleeping Beauty*, and *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*). Shrek, for example, embarks on what may be understood as a hero's journey—in the manner of Joseph Campbell's *Hero with a Thousand Faces*—in this case with the male protagonist in search of a princess. Along the way, the hero meets other characters who assist him in his quest; the film also features a fire breathing dragon as well as an alter-ego villain, Lord Farquaad. However, *Shrek* distinguishes itself as a postmodern variant of the traditional fairy tale in a number of important ways. To begin with, the hero happens to be a green ogre—ogres are usually not the stuff of heroism in fairy tales. The fairy godmother—also presented against type—is a villainous figure, and her equally devious son, Charming, is quite a departure from the noble prince of the traditional fairy-tale narrative.

The very first scene in *Shrek* alerts the viewer to many of these narrative reversals and establishes the film's subversive approach: the story, it is clear, is representative of a nontraditional fairy tale that challenges earlier examples of this narrative form. In this opening scene, a voiceover narrator reads a fairy tale about a princess in search of her true love; however, the narration is soon disrupted by the image of an ogre's hand ripping out a page of the book that is being read. Viewers then hear the sound of a flushing toilet, which they realize is located in Shrek's outhouse. Significantly, these scenes reflect a filmic shift away from an anonymous, nondiegetic narrator who is not a character in the story, to a diegetic narrator, who most definitely is a character—Shrek himself reading the story in his outhouse. Shrek's incongruous appearance in the film's title sequence, then—he takes a mud shower and consumes a bowl full of eyeballs—acts to undercut audience expectations of a "charming" prince.

One of the ways in which *Shrek* represented a breakthrough for animated films was its success in appealing to diverse demographic groups: children, adults, and even film studies scholars. Unlike audiences of the past, which may have dismissed animated films as suitable only for children, contemporary audiences have come to appreciate the fact that animated films may include adult content as well as technical features that computer-savvy audiences can appreciate. *Shrek* is significant in the history of animated film not only because of the number of famous actors who lent their voices to

the production (Mike Myers as Shrek, Eddie Murphy as Donkey, Cameron Diaz as Princess Fiona, and Antonio Banderas as Puss n' Boots), but also because of its clever use of pastiche, intertextuality, and innovative cinematography. *Shrek*, for instance, contains countless references to contemporary popular culture; it also uses the visual techniques of live-action film, including long shots, close-ups, high- and low-angle shots, parallel editing and montage—elements that may help to explain why adult audiences appreciate the film.

While *Shrek* has been marketed primarily to children, adult themes are plainly woven through the visual narrative. For example, the Big Bad Wolf is costumed in a pink dress and nightcap, seemingly reinscribing the image of the wolf in grandma's clothing that is a foundational element in the traditional fairy tale "Little Red Riding Hood"; however, because the wolf in *Shrek* is presented outside the context of this formative fairy tale—and within the context of a non-traditional, and on an extremely important level, very adult fairy tale—his transvestism is readily apparent, as are the peculiar proclivities of a cross-dressing bartender who appears in *Shrek II*. Some adult viewers have been critical of the level of sexual suggestiveness that is apparent in these pictures, demonstrating, it seems, the fine line that filmmakers must walk in order to create movies that appeal to inter-generational audiences.

Like Disney's Pixar films, in relationship to which crossover toys were mass-marketed, the *Shrek* movies became even more popular because of the complementary merchandise and bonus features that were marketed to the films' many fans. In addition to DVD versions of the film, which include games and technical bloopers to appeal to the child spectator, Shrek characters have found their way into toy stores and even onto grocery store shelves. Indeed, fans have even had the opportunity to consume Shrek pasta and Shrek Halloween treats.

Film sequels are often less successful than the original films; however, *Shrek 2* (2004) was even more appealing than *Shrek*. Every bit as clever as the original—and perhaps even more subversive in its intertextual references to popular culture—it became the highest-grossing film of 2004. The familiar characters of the original were all back: Shrek and Fiona return from their honeymoon to find an invitation from Fiona's parents to visit them in the land of Far, Far Away. Here, Shrek is transformed into human form, complementing Fiona's earlier hybrid status as woman/female ogre in the original story. *Shrek 2* also caters to adult tastes, with Puss 'n Boots (again voiced by Antonio Banderas) being arrested for holding catnip. The scene functions as a combination of homage and parody, as it is clearly reminiscent of the drug busts featured on the reality television show *Cops*.

Shrek The Third (2007) takes the ongoing Shrek narrative in yet another direction by focusing on the search for a new successor for the kingdom of Far, Far Away. After Fiona's father, King Harold, passes away, Shrek rejects the idea of taking on the role. Instead, he leaves the kingdom, along with Donkey and Puss n' Boots, to search for King Harold's nephew, Arthur Pendragon (Justin Timberlake). The plot of this third installment is more convoluted and less focused than the other two films, involving a host of villainous fairy-tale characters who side with (Prince) Charming against the Shrek contingent in order to apprehend innocent fairy-tale characters. Princess Fiona

is relegated to a peripheral role, as she is pregnant and stays far, far away in Far, Far Away while Shrek ventures forth. The introduction of legendary characters such as Arthur and Merlin may have also created a certain sense of confusion in the minds of some viewers that the earlier Shrek films avoided by focusing on the adventures of characters within a circumscribed fairy-tale world rather than introducing characters from distant legends and other fairy tales.

See also: Animation

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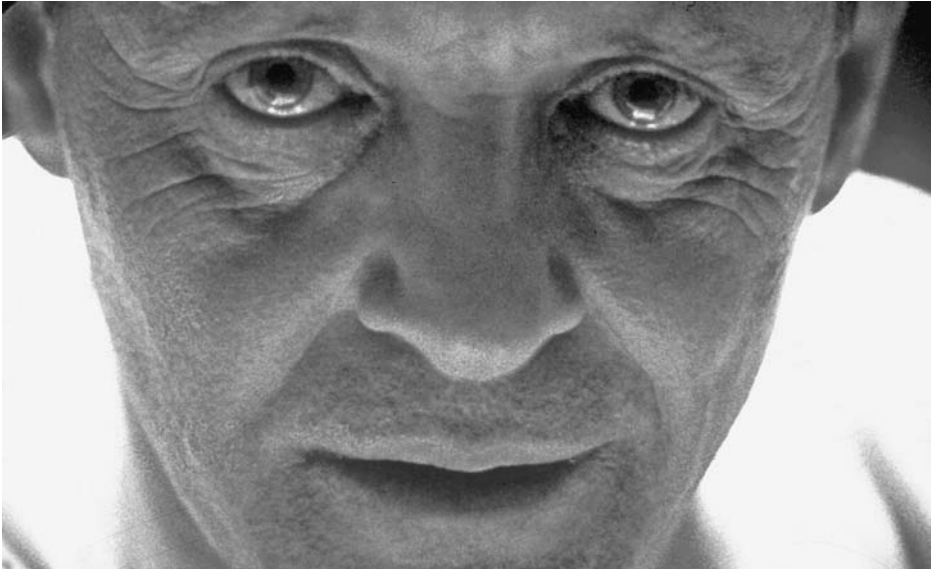
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—Karin Beeler

SILENCE OF THE LAMBS, THE. In *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991), FBI trainee Clarice Starling (Jodie Foster) investigates "Buffalo Bill" (Ted Levine), a serial killer who kidnaps, kills, and skins women. Directed by her superior Jack Crawford (Scott Glenn), Starling questions psychiatrist Hannibal Lecter (Anthony Hopkins), a long-imprisoned serial killer who cannibalized his victims. Starling asks Lecter to profile Buffalo Bill, and he proposes a quid pro quo arrangement. He will share his insights if Starling recounts traumatic childhood memories, such as her father's death and witnessing the slaughter of lambs. Meanwhile, Bill kidnaps another woman, setting a timer on the FBI's manhunt. From Lecter, Starling learns that Bill seeks to transform himself, which is why he leaves moth cocoons with his victims—the pupa symbolizes transformation. Later, Starling deduces that Bill intends to fashion a "woman suit" from his victims' skin. By film's end, Lecter escapes confinement, and Starling locates Bill in time to save the kidnapped woman.

Gender issues are central to *Silence*, not only in Bill's gender-bending transformation and the misogyny of his crimes, but in the obstacles Starling faces as a female agent. Several shots and scenes emphasize Starling's small stature next to larger, stronger men. Starling repeatedly attracts the male gaze, which Lecter underscores by asking, "Don't you feel eyes moving over your body, Clarice?" Crawford manipulates a local policeman's sexist desire to shield Starling from gruesome evidence to get him to cooperate. Starling objects but is not above exploiting her femininity or flirting to advance her investigation. Indeed, Crawford strategically chooses a woman for the assignment, as eros partly motivates Lecter's cooperation. After several interviews, Lecter jokes, "People will say we're in love." Many have identified feminist themes in *Silence*, a reading perhaps inflected by Foster's other roles and public persona.

Silence also posits Crawford and Lecter as father figures to Starling, whose biological father, also a policeman, was killed when she was a child. Starling clearly respects



Scene from the 1991 film *Silence of the Lambs*, starring Anthony Hopkins. Directed by Jonathan Demme. (Photofest)

Crawford and reacts proudly to his fatherly praise. The film juxtaposes her first meeting with Lecter with a flashback of her father; the inclusion of similar tracking-shot sequences in both scenes cements the comparison. Both Lecter and Crawford serve as Starling's teachers and advisors. Both also manipulate her for their own ends. Later, when Starling graduates from training, Crawford tells her that her father would be proud, and a close-up of their handshake recalls a poignant shot of Lecter handing Starling a file, their first and only physical contact. In this resonant moment, the film unites all three fathers.

Director Jonathan Demme shot much of *Silence* with craftsmanlike simplicity, but several sequences and techniques are noteworthy. Throughout much of the film, Bill is shot from behind, in long shots, or in close-ups revealing only parts of his body. Like Starling, we must create our own "profile" of Bill from limited information. When we finally see Bill in full shot, the effect is disturbing. He stands naked with his genitals tucked between his legs to resemble a woman; wears makeup and other feminine accessories, including the scalp and hair of his unfinished woman suit; and strikes a pose reminiscent of Lecter's arrangement of a victim's corpse.

Silence utilizes horror film tropes, such as close shots of the female protagonist exploring claustrophobic rooms. These shots create anxiety by preventing us from perceiving offscreen threats. As the FBI closes in on Bill, Demme also tricks us with some horror-film legerdemain. He cuts between interior shots of Bill in his house and exterior shots of Crawford's agents approaching what we assume to be the same house. However, Crawford's men raid a vacant home, and we are surprised to learn that it is Starling, not the FBI team, ringing Bill's doorbell.

The film repeatedly alludes to Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960). In fact, both Buffalo Bill and Norman Bates were based, in part, on real-world serial killer Ed Gein. Near the remains of Bill's first victim is a stuffed hawk, an allusion to Bates's stuffed birds. Demme also emulates Hitchcock's technique of cutting between point-of-view tracking shots and reaction tracking shots when Starling walks to her first interview with Lecter and in flashbacks of her father.

Silence received critical acclaim and is one of only three films to win the five most prestigious Academy Awards (Picture, Director, Screenplay, Actor, and Actress). Controversy emerged over the possibly homophobic choice to represent Bill as gay or transsexual, a fact that may have informed Demme's decision to direct *Philadelphia* (1993), which portrays homosexuals positively.

See also: Feminist Film Criticism; Foster, Jodie; Male Gaze, The; Women in Film

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—Eric L. Sarlin

SINGIN' IN THE RAIN. Co-directed by Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen, *Singin' in the Rain* has come to epitomize the MGM musical. Though not a notable critical success when released in 1952, in 2002 *Sight & Sound's* once-a-decade poll of leading critics ranked it among the top 10 films of all time. A warm and humorous depiction of the genre's origins, the film's reputation grew as critics recognized how it self-consciously refracts that story through a contemporary lens. While on the surface a consummate studio musical, *Singin' in the Rain* also offers a strikingly complex consideration of the nature of musicals at a time when their era was drawing to a close.

Producer Arthur Freed conceived the production as a "catalogue" musical featuring songs he wrote with Nacio Herb Brown for films made in the 1920s and 1930s. As a backdrop, screenwriters Betty Comden and Adolph Green formulated a simple plot driven by the problems facing Don Lockwood (Kelly) and Lina Lamont (Jean Hagen), a silent film duo whose careers are threatened by the transition to sound. In particular, Don is hampered by simplistic dialogue and Lina has an extremely unpleasant voice. These difficulties are winkingly based on anecdotes like the story of John Gilbert's career decline after the arrival of sound—indeed, Gilbert appeared in *The Hollywood Revue of 1929*, in which the song "Singin' in the Rain" debuted.

After a disastrous preview of Lockwood-and-Lamont's first talkie, Don's best friend Cosmo Brown (Donald O'Connor) proposes that they rework the film into a musical, with Don's girlfriend Kathy Selden (Debbie Reynolds) dubbing Lina's voice. Lina is enraged when she learns of this, and also jealous of Kathy's relationship with Don; however, she turns the situation to her advantage by blackmailing studio head R. F. Simpson (Millard Mitchell) into continuing the arrangement without giving Kathy credit. The premiere, with Kathy's voice instead of Lina's on the soundtrack, is a hit, but when the audience insists that Lina reprise "Singin' in the Rain," Don, Cosmo, and R. F. raise the curtain to reveal Kathy singing the part. Don introduces Kathy as the "real star," and the film closes on a billboard advertisement for "Singin' in the Rain" with Don Lockwood and Kathy Selden."



Dancer and actor Gene Kelly and Debbie Reynolds in *Singin' in the Rain*, directed by Stanley Donen and Kelly, 1952. (Warner Bros./Getty Images)

As the decision to start with the songs rather than the story reflects, the essence of the film lies in its musical numbers. They serve as an index to major styles from the history of the musical, but all are couched in the form of the "integrated" musical, an approach endorsed by Kelly/Donen. As developed and popularized by Agnes de Mille's Broadway choreography for *Oklahoma!* (1943), this technique integrates performance into the plot rather than bracketing it off. Instead of "pausing" the plot for the sake of singing and dancing, in an integrated musical the plot continues throughout. Thus, Kelly's number "Singin' in the Rain" is *both* symbolic of Don's joy at being in love *and*, quite literally, an impromptu performance taking place in the real world of the film, visible as such to confused passersby. This logic extends throughout: all of the characters who perform are professionals within the narrative, and the characters who are not performers, such as R. F., or are untalented, such as Lina, have no numbers.

The integration of the numbers, despite their unrealistic aspects such as the frequent use of nondiegetic music, underlines the film's self-reflexivity. Interestingly, its openness is itself an illusion: despite the claim that using uncredited vocal talent is

reprehensible, for instance, Reynolds's singing voice was dubbed by an uncredited Betty Noyes. Similarly, though the film promotes "spontaneous" performance, in fact Kelly was a perfectionist who rigorously rehearsed the choreography. As Jane Feuer argues, *Singin' in the Rain* employs a putative demystification of the musical only in order to remystify it. While other films in the 1950s pursued greater realism, *Singin' in the Rain* makes use of the trappings of realism as a way of contending that professional "entertainment" is more desirable. Caught between changing tastes and a different economic structure that rendered big-budget musicals less feasible, *Singin' in the Rain* is one of the great achievements of the MGM musical system and, simultaneously, an encapsulation of why that system would not persist.

See also: Music in Film; Musical, The

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—Matthew Sewell

SINGLES. Writer and director Cameron Crowe's 1992 film *Singles* is a snapshot in time, capturing the trials and tribulations of a group of twenty-somethings looking for love in Seattle's fledgling grunge scene. Traffic manager Steve (Campbell Scott) meets environmentalist Linda (Kyra Sedgwick) at a Seattle night club and is smitten; Linda, though, is wary about love, having been hurt too many times in the past. Steve's neighbor and former flame, Janet (Bridget Fonda), is a true romantic and former architecture student who works at a coffeehouse. She's obsessed with Cliff (Matt Dillon), a wannabe rock star who works any number of odd jobs to stay afloat, and who does not appreciate Janet at all. Then there is Debbie (Sheila Kelley), an advertising executive holding onto her 1980s look, who turns to video dating in search of her soul mate, and Bailey (Jim True-Frost), an artsy Bohemian type.

Steve and Linda embark on a romance, enjoying the first days of falling in love and being each other's everything—until they face the ultimate test, an unplanned pregnancy. When Linda loses the baby in an auto accident, she buries herself in her work and the couple breaks up. Steve falls into a deep depression, one that is worsened when the mayor (Tom Skerritt) declines to back his pet project, a "Supertrain" that would change the face of Seattle. Janet, meanwhile, decides to have breast augmentation, thinking it will make Cliff happy. Thanks to her new doctor (Bill Pullman), Janet decides that she is fine just the way she is, thank you, and begins to ignore Cliff. Of course, once Janet stops throwing herself at him, Cliff pulls out all the stops in an attempt to win her over. In the end, the singles are reunited and paired off, with non-committal Bailey the exception. Linda realizes that Steve is the man for her, and Cliff proves his worth to Janet. Even Debbie finds love, despite her disastrous attempt at video dating, a sequence that includes scenes with the forever "thirty-something"—will

this guy ever shave?—Peter Horton. The wonderful Eric Stoltz puts in a brief appearance as a Bitter Mime; while Jeremy Piven plays a hyper drugstore cashier—a younger version of Ari Gold from *Entourage*?; and filmmaker Tim Burton, Hitchcocklike, appears briefly on-screen. Even Crowe steps out from behind the camera, showing up on-screen as a journalist interviewing Cliff in a nightclub.

More than just a film about finding love, *Singles* is a chronicle of Generation X— young people raised in the 1960s and 1970s, who came of age in the 1980s. Unlike the baby boomers, many of whom spent their youth in the 1960s indulging in free love and experimenting with drugs, the members of Gen-X faced AIDS, herpes, and crack epidemics, as well as an uncertain economy. The affluence and rampant consumerism of the 1980s gave way to a fiscal crisis in the late 1980s and early 1990s, which in turn resulted in a poor job market, and underemployment for many Gen-Xers. Cynical and perceived to be lacking ambition, members of Generation X reveled in being the stereotypical “slackers”—content to get by with just enough rather than killing themselves in some perverse attempt to keep up with, and outdo, the Joneses. Grunge personified this stereotype, with a physical look that included torn jeans, flannel shirts, knit caps, and unkempt hair. The unofficial king of Gen-X was the tragic Kurt Cobain—who ultimately killed himself—lead singer of the grunge rock group Nirvana, the band that, for many, defined the Seattle music scene during the 1980s and early 1990s.

The rise of grunge marked a return to the popularity of rock-and-roll music after years of chart domination by pop and dance music. A former music journalist who wrote for *Rolling Stone* magazine and was married to musician Nancy Wilson of the rock group Heart, Crowe was no stranger to the music scene. In fact, he claimed that the screenplay for *Singles* was ultimately influenced by another tragic death, the accidental overdose of his friend Andy Wood, the lead singer of Mother Love Bone. As in Crowe’s previous films, *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* and *Say Anything*, the soundtrack for *Singles* provided an aural framework for the picture’s narrative sequences. Indeed, the film includes performances by grunge bands that were popular in Seattle at the time: Soundgarden, Alice in Chains, and Pearl Jam—whose real-life members portrayed the filmic members of Cliff’s band, Citizen Dick. The soundtrack also includes material from the Lovemongers, Mudhoney, Mother Love Bone, and Screaming Trees; and Paul Westerberg offerings bookend the narrative sequences, with his “Waiting for Somebody” opening the picture and his “Dyslexic Heart” playing as the credits roll.

See also: Coming-of-Age Film, The; Music in Film; Romantic Comedy, The

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—Michele Camardella

SIXTEEN CANDLES. A teenage girl's 16th birthday is supposed to include a big party, the perfect boyfriend, and a shiny new car, all wrapped up with a bright red bow. But what happens when the members of your family forget your big day because they are consumed with planning your older sister's wedding? Ask high school sophomore Samantha Baker (Molly Ringwald), the birthday girl in John Hughes's 1984 romantic teen comedy *Sixteen Candles*. Much to her dismay, Sam awakens on her big day—the day before her sister's wedding—looking exactly as she did yesterday, when she was just 15. Her mother (Carlin Glynn) forgets to make her special carrots for lunch, and no one in her family remembers it is her birthday, much less her Sweet Sixteen birthday! As children's author Judith Viorst might have said, she was having a "Terrible, Horrible, No-Good, Very Bad Day" indeed.

Things go from bad to worse as she struggles with her fear that the object of her infatuation, super-popular senior Jake Ryan (Michael Schoeffling), has learned that she is a virgin and is saving herself for him. To add insult to injury, Sam has been relegated to sleeping on the living room sofa so that her visiting grandparents—they are



Scene from the 1984 film *Sixteen Candles*, starring Molly Ringwald (right). Directed by John Hughes. (Photofest)

there not for her birthday, but for her sister's wedding—can stay in her bedroom, and has been forced to entertain Long Duk Dong (Gedde Watanabe), a nerdy foreign exchange student, at the school dance. Distraught about her birthday and sure that Jake does not know that she exists, Sam hides in the school's auto shop, where the love-sick Geek (Anthony Michael Hall) eventually finds her. His serenades—and fumbling romantic advances—fail to cheer her up; his news that Jake is also interested in her, however, gives Sam hope, so much so that she agrees to loan the Geek her underwear so that he can win a box of floppy computer disks in a bet.

Unable to bring herself to speak to Jake while retrieving her coat in a subtly drawn comic sequence at the end of the dance, Sam returns home, all the more depressed because Long Duk Dong has managed to find an American girlfriend in a mere five hours. A bedtime heart-to-heart with her father (Paul Dooley) also fails to provide solace. Jake, meanwhile, finds that his longtime girlfriend, the perfect Carolyn (Haviland Morris), has invited half the school back to his parents' house for a wild party while Mom and Dad are out of town. Fed up with her antics and disgusted by what his childish friends have done to his parents' house, Jake entrusts Geek with the task of driving an unconscious Carolyn home in his father's Rolls-Royce. The next day, having found the Geek and Carolyn looking a bit too cozy in the back seat of the Rolls, Jake sees an "out" and ends the relationship, showing up at the church where Sam's sister, an over-medicated Ginny (Blanche Baker), has just married Rudy (John Kapelos). Jake whisks bridesmaid Sam away for a romantic birthday party for two, giving her the perfect Sweet Sixteen, after all.

Written and directed by Hughes, *Sixteen Candles* captures the awkwardness and fragility of being a teenager, including the monotony of going to class, the respite provided by hanging out with friends, and the frustration of dealing with seemingly clueless adults who just don't get it. Unlike the serious teen cinema of the mid-1950s, which inevitably dealt with troubled adolescents, the bulk of 1980s teen movies included physical comedy that lightened the overall tone of the films and promised a positive outcome. In her breakout role as Samantha, Ringwald perfectly embodied the angst-ridden teenager—mawkish but not pathetic, sweet, romantic, adorable. Indeed, *Sixteen Candles* launched Ringwald's career—she would also appear in *The Breakfast Club*, *Pretty in Pink*, *The Pickup Artist*, and *For Keeps?* during the 1980s, effectively playing the same role with impeccable charm. For his part, Hughes spoke to teenagers on their own level—he would go on to write and/or direct other iconic teen films: *The Breakfast Club* (1985), *Pretty in Pink* (1986), and *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* (1986). So popular would Ringwald become that she and a number of other hot young actors with whom she co-starred—Emilio Estevez (co-starred in *The Breakfast Club*), Michael Anthony Hall (co-starred in *Sixteen Candles* and *The Breakfast Club*), Andrew McCarthy (co-starred in *Pretty in Pink*), Judd Nelson (co-starred in *The Breakfast Club*), and Ally Sheedy (co-starred in *The Breakfast Club*)—would be dubbed members of the "Brat Pack," a play on Frank Sinatra's 1960s "Rat Pack," which included Dean Martin, Peter Lawford, and Sammy Davis Jr.

See also: Coming-of-Age Film, The; Music in Film; Romantic Comedy, The

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—Michele Camardella

SIXTH SENSE, THE. The five natural senses are sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. A sixth sense has always been characterized as beyond natural, conveying an ability to perceive the paranormal. In other words, *The Sixth Sense*, by its title alone, gives rise to an expectation in viewers that they are going to watch a film about the supernatural. While it fulfills this expectation admirably, this film is much more than a simple ghost story.

Written and directed by M. Night Shyamalan, this delicately nuanced film with its unexpected plot twists shook the world of popular culture, earning six Academy Award nominations when it was released in 1999, and winning a number of lesser honors, including the People's Choice Award. Breaking away from the gory, effects-driven horror movies that had dominated the genre for at least a decade, and leaning more toward the nineteenth-century literature of Ambrose Bierce, H. H. Munro, and Henry James,



Scene from the movie *The Sixth Sense*, which received a Best Picture Academy Award nomination in 2000. Shown are Haley Joel Osment (left) and Bruce Willis. (AFP/Getty Images)

the reality-shifting plot had people talking about the film at the watercooler, dragging their friends off to see it, and standing in line to see it again.

The Sixth Sense begins with an expository flashback that introduces award-winning child psychologist Dr. Malcolm Crowe (Bruce Willis) on the night that he is shot by a disturbed former patient. As the action resumes months later, a strangely diminished Dr. Crowe is meeting a new client, Cole Sear (Haley Joel Osment), a painfully shy boy who dreams of being liked and included by his classmates, but who is plagued by the attentions of individuals who have suffered violent deaths—as Cole tells Dr. Crowe, “I see dead people!” Sometimes, Cole reveals, besides scaring him, the dead physically hurt him. The plot at this point is concerned with how Dr. Crowe will come to grips with the presence of the paranormal, and how the boy will ultimately be saved by the adult. But this is not the traditional story of a helpless child-victim being saved by the white-knight professional psychologist. Dr. Crowe is in far more need of help than even he is aware; indeed, it is the boy who will ultimately save the man.

In *The Sixth Sense* Shyamalan suggests that communication, even between those who care for each other—especially between those who care for each other—is difficult, halting, and secretive. Cole keeps the visits from the dead locked away from his confused but supportive mother (Toni Collette); Dr. Crowe seems unable to talk to his former, and formerly supportive and loving wife; and Cole is wary of Dr. Crowe, reluctant to reveal his secret. Eventually, however, Cole feels safe enough to confide in Dr. Crowe, and the barriers to communication begin to crumble. The boy listens to the unwitting ghosts who visit him, helping them resolve unfinished business they have with the world of the living. Cole is empowered, and no longer victimized. He can finally reveal his inner life to his mother, who loves him. In the end, with Cole’s help, Dr. Crowe is finally able to talk to his wife, telling her he loves her. Even more importantly, his wife can hear him, even though it turns out that Crowe has been one of the violently dead, a ghost since the attack depicted in the first scene. For the viewer, this epiphany challenges every scene in the movie, as each motivation and action is transformed by this new awareness.

The plot of *The Sixth Sense* is brilliant, but it is the sensitive acting that makes the film believable, heartbreaking, and sweetly triumphant. Bruce Willis is at his best as Dr. Crowe; but it is the performance of young Haley Joel Osment as Cole that holds the film together. Osment is fragile, funny, geeky, brave, and tremblingly human.

This film stays with the viewer long after the closing credits, raising questions that may have no answers: How do we know we are alive? What is real? And perhaps most importantly, what does love have to do with all of this? Maybe the sixth sense is not the ability to see ghosts but the even rarer ability fully to communicate love. It has been said that we are born alone, we live alone, and we die alone—trapped within the cage of our five senses. In this film, Shyamalan gives us a glimpse of another sense, connecting us through bonds of trust, hope, and love throughout and even beyond our mortal lives.

See also: Horror Film, The; Science Fiction Film, The

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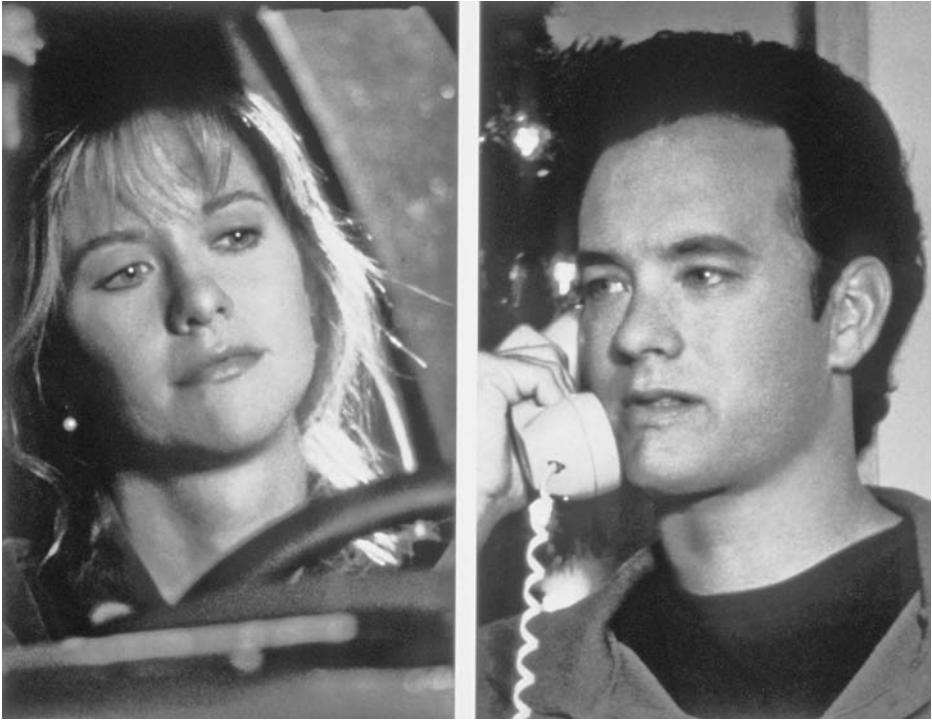
—Helen M. York

SLEEPLESS IN SEATTLE. An unabashedly romantic film, *Sleepless in Seattle* became *the* date movie of 1993, and eventually grossed \$125 million. The film opens with Sam Baldwin (Tom Hanks) explaining to his son Jonah (Ross Malinger) how his mother succumbed to cancer. Grief-stricken, Sam moves to Seattle. Eighteen months later and with Sam still mourning, Jonah calls a radio psychiatrist who convinces Sam to talk about his wife. Listening to the broadcast in Baltimore, Annie Reed (Meg Ryan) cries over Sam's story. Annie becomes preoccupied with Sam, despite being engaged to Walter (Bill Pullman). Annie even writes a letter asking Sam to meet her on top of the Empire State Building on Valentine's Day.

Back in Seattle, Sam struggles to rejoin the dating world, sharing a sidesplitting exchange with Jay (Rob Reiner) about the perils of dating in the 1990s. Sam eventually starts dating Victoria (Barbara Garrick), leading Jonah to call the radio psychiatrist and to claim that "my father's been captured by a ho." Listening in Baltimore, a distressed Annie flies to Seattle to find Sam. After unknowingly catching Sam's eye in the airport, Annie mistakes Sam's sister for his girlfriend, believing he is in love with her. Before flying back to Baltimore and attempting to forget about the whole sad situation, Annie again catches Sam's attention by almost being run over.

Unhappy with his father's choice of girlfriend, Jonah pleads with Sam to meet Annie, whose letter he liked. Upset with his father's refusal, Jonah flies to New York by himself, and a panicked Sam follows on the next flight. Jonah and Sam reunite at the Empire State Building in an emotional scene. On the other side of town, Annie breaks off her engagement and rushes to the top of the Empire State Building. There she finds Jonah's forgotten Seattle Mariner's backpack, seemingly knowing to whom it belongs. When Sam and Jonah return for the backpack, Sam recognizes Annie and the two leave hand-in-hand.

Sleepless in Seattle was heavily influenced by another romantic film, *An Affair to Remember* (1957). Throughout *Sleepless*, the characters watch and reference the earlier film, which is where Annie gets the Empire State Building idea. Jay even counsels Sam to "think Cary Grant" while talking to women. That association adds to the film's



Scene from the 1993 film *Sleepless in Seattle*, starring Meg Ryan and Tom Hanks. Directed by Nora Ephron. (Photofest)

sentimentality, which accounts for how it moves the audience. A connection can be made with each character as they are all familiar and likable. Even Walter, who would have been easy for writer/director Nora Ephron to make unlovable, comes across as friendly and affable. The strong friendship between Annie and Becky (Rosie O'Donnell) and the loving relationship between Sam and Jonah add to the film's emotionality and further connect the viewer to the characters. Relatable personalities help overcome the occasionally contrived plot points, creating an atmosphere where the viewer empathizes with the characters. As Roger Ebert wrote, the film is "as ephemeral as a talk show, as contrived as the late show, and yet so warm and gentle I smiled the whole way through."

Significantly, the film turned out to be important for the careers of both Hanks and Ryan. The two had already co-starred in an earlier film—the quirky *Joe Versus the Volcano* (1990). Unfortunately, audiences were baffled by the film, and it ended up being a box-office flop. But Hanks went on to make the extremely successful *A League of Their Own* and Ryan *Prelude to a Kiss*, both of which were released in 1992, and their individual successes helped convince Ephron that reuniting the two popular stars was not as risky as some thought. The pairing worked so well that Hanks and Ryan would join to make *You've Got Mail* (1998).

It may be that what made audiences “smile the whole way through” *Sleepless in Seattle* were its suggestions that within the global village anyone can be your soul mate and that when romance is real, nothing can stand in its way. At least for a brief time in a darkened theatre, viewers could hope that everyone’s destiny is to be filled full with love and happiness.

See also: Romantic Comedy, The

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—Sean Graham

SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS. In 1935, Walt Disney thought about turning six cartoon shorts into one feature film. But would audiences patiently watch for 83 minutes? When *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, based on the German fairy tale “Schneewittchen,” from the Brothers Grimm’s collection, premiered on December 21, 1937, the audience—studded with celebrities—cheered wildly for the first full-length animated feature film in movie history. *Snow White* turned out to be a blockbuster, taking in more money than any movie before. The reviews praised it as a masterpiece of animation. In 1939, Disney received an honorary Academy Award for his pioneer work and significant screen innovation, and in 2008, the American Film Institute called it the greatest animated film of all time.

With *Snow White*, Disney sought to speak to both children and adults, and in the process, completely redefined the nature of movie entertainment. He presented viewers with a simple story and an attractive protagonist with whom they could easily identify. Snow White is forced by her evil stepmother, the queen of the court, to work as a lowly maid. The queen, who continual calls upon her magic mirror to proclaim that she is the “fairest of them all,” one day is disturbed to hear the mirror unexpectedly declare that Snow White is more beautiful than she. The queen orders her huntsman to kill the child, but he is unable to do so. In a bravura sequence that recalls German Expressionism, she flees through a dark, terrifying forest in which the trees leer and claw at her. Exhausted, she falls asleep but is discovered the next morning by forest creatures who lead her to the house of the seven dwarfs. Realizing that Snow White is still alive, the queen tricks her into biting a poisoned apple, which causes her to fall into a deep sleep. The dwarfs chase the queen until she falls to her death, and then put Snow White into a glass coffin, watching her body as the seasons change. Finally, a handsome prince spies Snow White, and, captivated by her beauty, kisses her, and she awakens.

Snow White, it seems, functions on multiple levels. For some, it was merely a sweet coming-of-age story; for others it was a Marxist critique of 1920s fiscal conservatism and a Freudian expression of sexual development. Thus, some interpreted the struggle



Snow White is cradled in the Prince's arms as the dwarfs celebrate, in a still from the animated film *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, 1937. (Disney/Courtesy of Getty In Images)

between the queen and Snow White as representative of the battle engaging an older generation's capitalism and fading sexuality and a younger generation's socialism and awakening sexuality: during puberty Snow White lives and matures with the dwarfs, a hardworking, communistic society; ready to become an adult, she is literally suspended until the handsome prince, with his symbolic kiss, makes her into a woman. Taking a very different perspective, the *Christian Century* called Disney an educator of the soul and suggested the picture was really a religious allegory: Snow White and her friends live in a Garden of Eden; the stepmother causes Snow White's "fall"; and the salvific Prince makes possible the triumph of love and the inculcation of family values.

However *Snow White* was understood, the picture's popularity was undeniable. This, it seems, had much to do with Disney's attention to detail and his decision to present the dwarfs as distinct and lovable personalities who balanced the evil of the stepmother-queen. The redemptive quality of the film also appealed to audiences who had been suffering through the Great Depression since 1929. Haunted by unemployment and poverty, the land of opportunity had turned into a nation of despair. Believing that his New Deal programs had successfully turned the economy around, however, Roosevelt slowed government spending after he was reelected in 1936, once again plunging the country into recession. Disney produced a film that responded to

the economic desperation of the time, reflecting the value of hard work, the virtue of community among common people, and the triumph of the underdog. It was his most thoroughgoing political statement since his 1933 Depression allegory *The Three Little Pigs*; and by offering his audiences a filmic release from the seemingly inescapable, he provided them with a sort of vicarious power over a world that appeared hopelessly out of control.

See also: Animation; Disney, Walt

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—Daniela Ribitsch

SOUND OF MUSIC, THE. Released in 1965, Twentieth Century-Fox's *The Sound of Music* was nominated for 10 Oscars and won five, including Best Picture and Best Director (Robert Wise). Julie Andrews and Christopher Plummer play the lead roles—a young novitiate named Maria and a widowed Austrian naval officer, Captain von Trapp. Their lives intersect in the late 1930s when Maria is sent to work as a nanny to the captain's seven children. *The Sound of Music* is at once a coming-of-age story, a nod toward the *Heimatfilm* genre (literally the "home-land" film), and a tribute to the masterful musical collaboration of Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein. Within a year of its release, *The Sound of Music* became the most financially successful film of all time, held that title for five years, and still plays to enthusiastic audiences around the world, epitomizing the international appeal of the American musical.

The Sound of Music is based loosely on the life of Vienna native Maria Augusta Kutschera (1905–1987), who grew up an orphan and studied at Vienna's State Teachers' College before seeking admission as a candidate at the Nonnberg Abbey in Salzburg. Soon after, Kutschera was sent to tutor the daughter of recently widowed Austrian naval officer Baron Georg Ritter von Trapp. According to her memoir, Kutschera fell in love with the family's seven children and married the baron in 1927. During the Depression, the family began singing publicly, and their success at the 1936 Salzburg Music Festival led to international appearances. The staunchly anti-Nazi family immigrated to the United States in 1938, undertaking several national and international tours before settling in Vermont.

By 1958, the von Trapp family's experience in Nazi-occupied Austria had become the basis for two German-language films (*Die Trapp-Familie* and *Die Trapp-Familie*

in Amerika), a book by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse, and a stage musical by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein. Rodgers and Hammerstein sold the movie rights to Twentieth Century-Fox in 1960. Ernest Lehman's screenplay, like the stage musical, takes considerable liberties with the original narrative. For example, the film overlooks Maria's early socialist upbringing in Vienna, turns Captain von Trapp's eldest child into a daughter—Liesl (Charmian Carr)—and overdramatizes the family's flight from Nazi-occupied Austria.

As Maria, Julie Andrews plays a bright, idealistic, if somewhat unfocused young novice who arrives at the von Trapp estate with an irrepressible optimism and her guitar. She wins over the Captain's seven children, relaxing the Captain's strict disciplinary code, and introducing them to tunes including "Do, Re Mi," "My Favorite Things," and "The Lonely Goatherd." Frightened by her blossoming romance with the much older Captain Von Trapp, Maria flees back to the abbey; after consulting with the Mother Abbess (Peggy Wood), however, she eventually returns to the family she loves. In a dramatic final scene, shot on location outside Salzburg and accompanied by a choral version of "Climb Ev'ry Mountain," the family hikes over the Alps to escape the Nazi dictatorship.

After warm receptions at previews in Tulsa and Minneapolis, *The Sound of Music* opened in Los Angeles in 1965. Critics described the film as sentimentalized fantasy, but acknowledged the musical prowess of Rodgers and Hammerstein. They also noted that the film avoided the stilted choreography plaguing most Broadway-based films, and lauded Wise's ability to integrate music, plot and a complex array of scenes shot both on location and in Hollywood. In addition to Best Film and Best Director, *The Sound of Music* won Academy Awards for Best Sound (James Corcoran and Fred Hynes), Best Score (Irwin Kostal), and Best Editing (William Reynolds).

The cinematic version of *The Sound of Music* is closely tied to its stage counterpart, largely because Rodgers and Hammerstein contributed to both productions; not surprisingly, given the involvement of the composers, both stage play and film are best known for their infectious melodies. Unlike in many Hollywood musicals, the songs in *The Sound of Music* are an integral part of the picture's narrative flow, contributing to the development of both characters and plot. "Do, Re, Mi," for example, is not simply a gratuitous production number; Maria uses the song to teach her young charges the notes of the scale—in the process freeing both their voices and their hearts.

See also: Music in Film; Musical, The

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—Kimberly A. Redding

SPLENDOR IN THE GRASS. Looking at the films and plays that challenged conventional moral standards of the 1950s and early 1960s, three names often appear: Tennessee Williams, Elia Kazan, and William Inge. As a journalist in 1944, Inge was assigned by his newspaper to do a feature article on Williams. In the course of this assignment, he realized that being a playwright was his biggest ambition. Before writing the original screenplay for *Splendor in the Grass*, Inge was previously known for his plays *Come Back Little Sheba* (1950), *The Dark at the Top of the Stairs* (1957) and *Picnic* (1953). Elia Kazan, who had previously directed two of Williams's most notable works, *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951) and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1958), directed *Splendor*.

Splendor tells the story of Bud Stamper (Warren Beatty) and Deanie Loomis (Natalie Wood), who are high school sweethearts in rural Kansas of 1928, but they and their more closely resemble teenagers of the early 1960s. Bud comes from a wealthy family, whose strong-willed father Ace has made his money from his oil wells, while Deanie comes from a much less affluent home. However, it is not class differences but sex, or rather the lack thereof, that provides the central tension of this story. Deanie's mother repeatedly warns her that to give into sex would taint her reputation and make her someone boys would not want as a wife. The mother presents sex as something unpleasant that has to be endured, not enjoyed. But when Deanie and Bud accompany Bud's sexually promiscuous older sister and her boyfriend on a date, she observes sex as adventurous and fun. From the increasing pressure Deanie feels from Bud, she is torn between becoming the promiscuous self-destructive easy lay or remaining the staid proper virginal good girl. Bud, going through each scene with ever-increasing sexual frustration, asks first his father and then his doctor for advice. The doctor understands Bud's dilemma but declines to advise him. Ace is too busy planning Bud's future to understand his crisis, and suggests finding a "different kind of girl" to satisfy his sexual appetite. Bud initially rejects his advice, saying that he only loves Deanie, but after a pivotal scene in which Bud, his pent-up sexual frustrations at their peak, pushes Deanie to her knees with all the visual cues that he wants her to give him oral sex (but using language that allowed the scene to be approved by the Production Code Administration), Deanie collapses in despair at what he seems to be asking of her. Bud focuses his attentions on a more sexually available girl, and Deanie, sensing his betrayal tries to become this "other type of girl," dressing in red, and trying to seduce a different boy. This act completes her mental unraveling and she attempts suicide. Although rescued, her mental state causes her to be institutionalized. The final segment of the film follows Bud and Deanie's separate paths.

Splendor was released in 1961, on the cusp of the 1960s sexual revolution. Its chief theme of sexual repression and how it affects its two main characters was an important cultural step in removing the taboo of sex, something not talked about to parents or professionals. As the decade continued, several other films continued pushing against the sexual mores of the time, most notably *Lolita* (1962), *Walk on the Wild Side* (1962), *Marnie* (1964), *The Graduate* (1967), and *Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice* (1969).

Hollywood was influenced by the field of psychiatry but altered it to fit its own moral agenda. Nina Leibman compares *Splendor* to another Kazan film, *A Streetcar*

Named Desire, arguing that Hollywood misused Freud's concept of sexual repression to control female sexuality. Unlike Freud's view that the repression of desire *was* the cause of psychological ailments, Hollywood made it appear that the *expression* of such feelings was the core of these maladies. Despite this criticism, however, *Splendor* made a strong statement against ignoring one's sexual urges or attempting to act as if this driving force behind romantic relationships should not be discussed.

Beatty's role as Bud would launch his career. For Wood, it would be one of her highest achievements. Inge too, reached the highest point of his career by winning an Academy Award for his screenplay. *Splendor* epitomizes Inge's major focus—that of lonely lives, unrealized longings, and the hypocrisy of traditional morality.

See also: Beatty, Warren; Kazan, Elia

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—Rick Lilla

STAGECOACH. In 1937, director John Ford bought the rights to the Ernest Haycox story "Stage to Lordsburg." Two years later, Ford would use the ideas from the story as the foundation for his iconic 1939 western *Stagecoach*. By the time he made *Stagecoach*, Ford had established himself as one of Hollywood's preeminent and most prolific directors. Interestingly, he had made many B-westerns early in his career, but had turned away from the genre for more than a decade before he made *Stagecoach* in 1939. The year proved to be not only an important one for Ford as a director—*Stagecoach* was accompanied by the release of his *Drums Along the Mohawk* and *Young Mr. Lincoln*—but a pivotal year for the screen western, as in addition to *Stagecoach* and *Drums Along the Mohawk*, films such as *Dodge City*, *Destry Rides Again*, *Jesse James*, *Union Pacific*, *The Oklahoma Kid*, *Frontier Marshal*, *Stand Up and Fight*, and *Man of Conquest* also appeared.

Stagecoach was the first of nine films that Ford would shoot in Arizona's ethereal Monument Valley, a vast, southwestern landscape marked by steep-edged mesas and soaring buttes. Shooting there was more than difficult in 1938. As Ford's grandson has pointed out, to get to Monument Valley, which was located 200 miles from Flagstaff, Arizona, the cast and crew were forced to drive over rutted dirt roads that were crossed by numerous streambeds, none of which had bridges. Once there, they were without phones or a telegraph, and at 5,000 feet, the area was brutally cold in the winter and almost unbearably hot in the summer. Still, Ford loved to shoot there; partly because it afforded him protection from studio heads back in Hollywood, but more importantly, because it gave his westerns the otherworldly look and feel that he desired.



Actors (from left) George Bancroft, John Wayne, and Louise Platt on the set of the movie *Stagecoach* in 1939. (Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images)

Ignoring the use of either a dateline or a scrolling historical explanation, Ford opens the picture with a series of sweeping establishing shots of Monument Valley, in which he crosscuts among cavalry troops, Indian warriors, and a stagecoach crossing the barren landscape. He then cuts to two lone, distant riders galloping straight at us. Using a series of dissolves, Ford takes us into a cavalry camp with its telegraph office, where a group of men wait anxiously for a message. Just before the line goes dead, a single-word missive comes over the wire: “Geronimo.” With this brilliantly simple plot device, Ford sets his story in the 1880s, when the Apache chieftain Geronimo fought the last of the battles that constituted the Indian Wars, which had raged since the United States and Mexico signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo that ended the Mexican-American War in 1848. He also defines the vast spaces of Monument Valley as uncivilized territory, filled with anonymous savages who must be kept from civilized folk by way of military force.

Cutting from the telegraph office to the bustling main street of a western town, Ford quickly relocates us within the boundaries of civilization. A stagecoach noisily makes its way down the street, stopping across from the Tonto Hotel. It is here, in Tonto, that Ford introduces us to the characters who will populate the stage: Dallas (Claire Trevor), a prostitute, and Doc Boone (Thomas Mitchell), an alcoholic physician, who are being driven from town by the members of the Ladies Law and Order League; Hatfield (John Carradine), a former Confederate soldier and Southern

sophisticate, who has been reduced to supporting himself by becoming a drifting gambler; Mrs. Lucy Malloy (Louise Platt), the gentle wife of a Union officer who is desperately trying to locate her husband; Ellsworth H. Gatewood (Berton Churchill), a stuffy, dismissive banker and prominent citizen of Tonto, who, while decrying progressive ideals as the ruination of the market economy, is sneaking out of town with embezzled funds; Samuel Peacock (Donald Meek), a docile, nervous whiskey drummer; Buck Rickabaugh (Andy Devine), the comical stagecoach driver; Marshal Curley Wilcox (George Bancroft), a tough, no-nonsense lawman; and, of course, the Ringo Kid (John Wayne), an escaped convict seeking to avenge the murders of his father and brother.

Given that *Stagecoach* has long been considered a landmark cinematic work because it succeeded in reimagining the formulaic structure of what was then the standard film western, it is surprising to note how conventional the film actually is—Ford even gives us the requisite cavalry-to-the-rescue scene near the end of the picture. Indeed, characters such as those who appear in *Stagecoach* had been seen—in myriad forms—in dozens of B-westerns by the time the picture was released in 1939, and in Ford's film they initially seem to be nothing more than conventional narrative elements functioning within the framework of a traditional western. Early on, however, we begin to realize that Ford will develop these apparently typical western characters against type—or at least as what may be understood as hybrid types. In the beginning, for instance, the civilized, gentlemanly Hatfield and gentle Lucy Malloy prove to be hard-hearted social snobs, while Dallas and Doc Boone, ostensibly savage violators of the social order, turn out to be salvific figures—Doc delivers Lucy's baby and Dallas watches over the new mother during and after the difficult delivery—who teach the rest of the passengers what being civilized really means. Such fictional character types were not new, of course—in fact, they were common stereotypes. Yet Ford provides us with much more: He slowly reveals to us that Hatfield's vocal defense of the elitist South may actually be connected to Hatfield's own disturbing sense of being rejected by his father; Ford also refuses to release Dallas and Doc from their existential struggles with prostitution and alcoholism.

Nowhere is this troping of conventional character types more powerfully articulated than in relation to the figure of the Ringo Kid. Not initially among the passengers who leave Tonto, Ringo halts the stage as it makes its way out of town into the vast reaches of Monument Valley by firing a shot from his carbine into the air. Ford, it seems, positions Ringo here, on the frontier borderline between civilization and savagery, intentionally. Such rogue characters—suitably violent, populist protectors of the people—were also not new; they traced their roots back to the nineteenth-century myths created around real-life figures such as Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett and fictional characters such as Natty Bumppo from the novels of James Fennimore Cooper. In Ford's hands, however, Ringo, although violent enough to help fight off an Indian attack and to avenge the murders of his father and brother, is in many ways an overgrown child, innocent in the ways of the world—he never seems to understand, for instance, that Dallas, with whom he falls in love, is a tainted woman, one, as we said, who will continue to be haunted by her past even as she rides off with Ringo to

begin her life anew. Ford even breaks from the code of the western by having Ringo and Dallas ride off into the sunrise—after an unsettling noirish night in Lordsburg—instead of into the sunset. They are headed for Mexico, transgressing, it seems, yet another border. Apparently, there is no place for them in America; as Doc says to Curley as they watch the couple go: “Well, they’re saved from the blessings of civilization.”

See also: Ford, John; Wayne, John; Western, The

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—Philip C. DiMare

STAR TREK SERIES, THE. Created by Gene Roddenberry, *Star Trek* began as a television series that ran on NBC from 1966 to 1969. It became an American phenomenon that continues to influence cultures and inspire fans around the world. *Star Trek* tells a story of adventure, exploration, and utopian communities in space, in a galaxy filled with strange alien beings, some wonderful, others terrifying. It is an adventure that everyone can enjoy; in its imagined future, all can live fulfilling lives, all are included in the community, and none are marginalized or oppressed. Unlike the *Superman* series, which tells of “the never ending battle for truth, justice, and the American way,” in *Star Trek*, that battle has been won. Now, a united humanity enjoys peace in the galaxy, justice in society, and truth in the pursuit of happiness. According to *Star Trek's* voiceover, space is the final frontier, and the adventure is to “explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life, new civilizations . . . to boldly go where no one has gone before.” This is the backdrop and the dream behind 11 full-length movies, hundreds of television episodes, an animated series, numerous comic book series, and countless novels, video games, fan clubs, and conventions.

Significantly, *Star Trek's* ideal future of truth, justice, and unlimited adventure is defined within the context of the real present using language and imagery that are necessarily products of the past. *Star Trek*, then, is a construction defined by its forward-looking creators; yet this has not diminished its popularity, or its influence. Continuing to fuel imaginations, *Star Trek* has attracted a millions-strong cult following and led to academic studies that explore its different manifestations in regard to myth, religion, sociology, history, law, race, gender, and class.

At the end of *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, Captain Kirk orders navigator Sulu to set the *Enterprise* in motion: “Ahead Warp 1.” Attempting to determine their destination, Sulu asks: “Heading, sir?” Kirk’s simple response is instructive: “Out there. That-away.” Another adventure has wound down and the *Enterprise* crew is ready for more. The appeal of this imagery is perennial, and it did not begin with *Star Trek*. Space as



Actors George Takei, James Doohan, Grace Lee Whitney, Nichelle Nichols, Stephen Collins, DeForest Kelley, Majel Barrett, William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, Persis Khambatta, and Walter Koenig pose for a portrait during the filming of the movie *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, 1979. (Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images)

the final frontier derives from notions of futurism and American progress. In the nineteenth century, American progress was imagined in terms of westward expansion. It was a dream of unlimited possibilities and endless progress made possible through science, courage, and the spirit of adventure needed to trek across the vast American continent. Though tempered by time and the reality of limited frontier territories, this ideal helped fuel the space race and remains important in shaping America's identity and civic philosophy. Its mythological imagery was first conceived in the literary western, where stories were told about heroic men and women facing and overcoming adversity in order to build civilization from the ground up. It found new life in science fiction, in the hope and expectation of space travel in the future and the reality of unlimited space beyond earth. The image of space as the ultimate frontier was first seen in science fiction novels and comic books, later in 1930s and '40s movie serials like *Flash Gordon* and *Buck Rogers*, and still later in the *Star Trek* television series and in films like *Star Wars* and *Star Trek*.

As a cultural descendant of the western, *Star Trek* emphasizes male camaraderie and values like honor, loyalty, and sacrifice. Although it shares features with heroic narratives like *Superman* and *I* its vision is grounded in science. It makes forays into fantasy, but it is primarily science fiction; its human characters do not have superpowers, although its alien characters are often endowed with super-strength compared with

humans. There tend to be no individual heroes whose sidekicks trail after them; rather, *Star Trek* presents us with groups of characters, each member playing an important role in preserving the stability of the greater community.

In their journeys into outer space, these characters explore the nature of humanity. As Joseph Campbell explained in his work on myth, the journey to outer space is also an inner journey. Curiosity is an important human trait, but it leads to discoveries about the self as much as it does to discoveries of what lies outside the self. This process of introspective exploration takes many turns as the different incarnations of *Star Trek* unfold. It is there from the beginning, however, in the original series through the character trio of Kirk, Spock, and McCoy, whose interactions were a source of humor and tension rarely duplicated elsewhere. They were the boys away from home, bound by loyalty and honor. As career military men, they were friends who brought out the best in each other, a unique, male-oriented family learning and growing together. On a more philosophical level, they represented symbolically three essential elements of human nature: head (Spock), heart (McCoy), and soul (Kirk). More accurately, Spock represents rationality, McCoy emotion, and Kirk a balance between the two. That balance is what makes Kirk a good captain, a role requiring courage, strength, and self-control.

The familial tension in the early series, and then later in the *Star Trek* films, arose mostly out of the clash between Spock and McCoy, out of the struggle between Spock's nearly uncompromising logic and McCoy's explosive emotionality. McCoy is not the only crew member who clashes with Spock, however. Indeed, because his logic makes him so very frustratingly un-human, he becomes a sort of alien touchstone in relation to which humanity is defined. This use of the alien that serves as representational Other to the human self is an important element of science fiction in general and of *Star Trek* in particular. When we look at each of the spin-off crews in *Star Trek*, we find one or two crew members whose "alienness" is defined, at least in part, by a lack of essential human traits, and whose contrast with humanity helps to define us. These characters include Data (*The Next Generation*), Odo (*Deep Space Nine*), the Doctor and Seven of Nine (*Voyager*), and T'Pol (*Enterprise*). Each of these characters lacks or suppresses that most essential of human traits, emotion, and eventually finds or embraces it. As they do so, each journeys closer to his or her own humanity—including Spock.

Delving further into inner space, *Star Trek* explores spirituality. *Star Trek's* creator excluded religion from the starship and the United Federation of Planets. Only a secular government could support Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combinations (the Vulcan multiracial, multiethnic philosophy at the heart of *Star Trek*). And, any single religion on the starship would inevitably come into conflict with others. Nevertheless, both original and *Next Generation* crews are confronted with alien religions, which they typically debunk. In *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier* (1989), for example, Spock's half brother, Sybok, leads the *Enterprise* across the "great barrier" of space in search of God, who turns out to be an evil alien.

After *The Next Generation*, *Star Trek* is more open to religion. *Voyager's* Captain Janeway discovers, in "Sacred Ground," that the spirits worshiped on an alien world

are real, and in “Concerning Flight,” finds science and spirituality compatible. In *Deep Space Nine*, the most religious of the *Star Trek* series, Captain Sisko discovers that the Bajoran gods, “the Prophets,” are real, although he calls them wormhole aliens. He serves as an emissary between them and the Bajorans, later discovers he was chosen for that role before his birth and is descended from the Prophets through his mother, and in the end, becomes one of them.

Significantly, *Star Trek* was created in the 1960s, a time of turmoil and social revolution. The civil rights movement, women’s liberation, free love, and antiwar protests, all made their way into *Star Trek*. The original series’ attempt to depict a future of social justice for all met with mixed success, however. Dramatic requirements conflicted with the series’ antiwar ideal, and the need for ratings and advertising dollars pitted the ideal of justice for minorities and women against racism and the attraction of miniskirts. Still, *Star Trek* displayed inclusion in every episode. The cast of characters in the original series was more multicultural than any other group on any other television show or film of the time.

In hindsight, of course, it is easy to see the limitations of the original *Star Trek*—women confined to traditional roles as sex objects, nurturers, and passive listeners; minority males limited to the lower ranks; and leading Caucasian characters shooting barbs at the single alien Commander. Some of the blame for this went to the network and its advertisers. They rejected the first pilot, featuring a female second in command, but accepted the second pilot, which put women “in their place,” on the periphery in miniskirts. But blame must also be accepted by the *Star Trek* writers, themselves, as they produced stories such as “Turnabout Intruder,” which proclaimed that it was Starfleet policy to exclude women from command.

Series spin-offs made progress. Instead of one woman on the regular crew in the original series (Uhura), there were two in *The Next Generation* (three in its first season). In an imaginary world strongly focused on male friendships, this at least gave women someone in whom they could confide. Women were also more prominent in the films, both as characters and in backdrops, beginning with *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock* (1984). Finally, in the third spin-off, *Star Trek: Voyager*, several women made it to the top. The *Star Trek* series had begun giving women token leadership in *The Next Generation*; Captain Picard’s boss, Admiral Nechayev, was a woman who appeared only on rare occasions. In *Voyager*, three main characters were women, two in the top ranks of captain and chief engineer.

Race was dealt with in both storylines and cast. In “Let That Be Your Last Battlefield” (*Star Trek*, season three), for example, racism was the cause of an alien civil war. But the differences between sides were insignificant; one group had white on the right side of the face and black on the left and claimed to be superior to the other group, which had black on the right side of the face and white on the left. Thus, when they destroyed each other, it was for no other reason than blind hatred. Alien crew members were also a resource for exploring racism. McCoy regularly railed against Spock’s pointy ears, green blood, and Vulcan logic. And, in “The Galileo Seven” (*Star Trek*, season one), crew members doubted Spock’s loyalty as the leader of an away mission. This theme was repeated in later series with Data (android), “The Doctor”

(hologram), and Seven of Nine (ex-Borg), all of whom lacked emotion, and, for that reason, were thought by other crew members incapable of loyalty.

The crew of the original *Star Trek* was very diverse. It included two nonethnic white males; alien, Japanese, Russian, and Irish crew members; and a black female. Backdrops, such as Federation Council meetings and alien bars, were scenes of even greater diversity, where humans mingled with strange and exotic species. In a form of tokenism that continued throughout the original series and films, black men were cast as admirals and other higher-ranking officers in occasional scenes depicting conversations between the captain and his superiors. Finally, in *The Next Generation*, a black male was cast as a human crew member, and in *Deep Space Nine*, as the series' leading character.

Star Trek uses aliens and alien societies, symbolically and allegorically, to deal with controversial issues like racism, sexism, homosexuality, and war. This use of the alien is an important part of what makes *Star Trek* what it is, a story combining the futurism of science fiction with a dream of American progress that, unlike its nineteenth-century ancestor, stands against injustice and oppression.

See also: Science Fiction Film, The

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—Susan de Gaia

STAR WARS SERIES, THE. *Star Wars* is the collective term for a franchise of media texts and products based on a core of six motion pictures. The original trilogy of *Star Wars* (1977), *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980), and *Return of the Jedi* (1983) was followed by a prequel trilogy of *The Phantom Menace* (1999), *Attack of the Clones* (2002), and *Revenge of the Sith* (2005). A seventh all-CGI film, *The Clone Wars* (2008), was inserted into the narrative of the prequels. While many people worked on the production of *Star Wars*, the franchise is typically described as the vision of its creator, George Lucas. *Star Wars* changed the nature of film in America by advancing the idea of the summer special-effects blockbuster and by becoming the gold standard



Scene from the 1980 film *Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back*, starring David Prowse (as Darth Vader; voice: James Earl Jones) and Mark Hamill (as Luke Skywalker). Directed by Irvin Kershner. (Photofest)

model in merchandising licensed products. *Star Wars* enjoyed enormous success. According to the Internet Movie Database, three of the films in the franchise (*Star Wars*, *Phantom Menace*, and *Revenge of the Sith*) placed in the top 10 of all-time top U.S. box-office takes.

The original trilogy revolves around the attempt by the heroic, outnumbered Rebel Alliance to overthrow the repressive Empire. The film centers on the character of Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill), a young man pursuing his destiny to become a Jedi. Mentoring Luke are Obi-Wan “Ben” Kenobi (Alec Guinness) and the alien Yoda (voiced by Frank Oz). Luke is aided by droids R2-D2 (Kenny Baker) and C-3PO (Anthony Daniels), the independent and resourceful Princess Leia (Carrie Fisher), and the roguish Han Solo (Harrison Ford) and his Wookiee first-mate Chewbacca (Peter Mayhew). In the second and third movies, the heroes are also joined by Lando Calrissian (Billy Dee Williams). Opposing these heroes is the intimidating villain Darth Vader (David Prowse, voiced by James Earl Jones), who leads the storm troopers on behalf of the Emperor (Ian McDiarmid).

When *Star Wars* debuted, the film took a different direction than science fiction movies of the past. Unlike the monster and alien invasion films of the 1950s that expressed American Cold War anxieties or the more cerebral fare of movies like *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), *Star Wars* struck out in the direction of epic space opera adventure. As with the films that followed in the series, the original movie used space as a backdrop for grand adventure, spiced with visual spectacle. Planets were the exotic

backdrops to these quests. Viewers were taken from the twin-sunned desert planet Tatooine to the menacing, moon-sized Death Star, a technological atrocity that destroys other worlds.

Audiences responded enthusiastically to *Star Wars*. The simple morality of the first film no doubt appealed to a nation that had gone through Watergate and was dealing with the cultural malaise during the Carter administration. This melodramatic strain runs through the original trilogy. Good has to work hard, but it generally triumphs against overwhelming odds to defeat evil in the end. Although fairly direct, the narratives of the films did spin out some surprises, most notably the shocking revelation, at the end of *Empire*, that Darth Vader was Luke's father. In *Return of the Jedi*, Luke is able to redeem his father when Vader dramatically sacrifices his own life to save Luke from being killed by the Emperor. Despite their surface differences, Han and Leia find true love. In the *Star Wars* universe, trust in friends is always rewarded.

The films' eye-popping special effects were also a tremendous draw. Audiences were treated to cutting edge special-effects sequences in all the movies. Although modern in effect, Jedi lightsaber duels invoked the swashbuckling swordfights of old Hollywood adventures. Space battles between Rebel X-Wings and Imperial TIE fighters drew on memories of fighter plane battles.

Viewers began to rewatch the spectacle, often bragging of the number of times they'd seen the films. The trilogy demonstrated that well-crafted special-effects blockbusters could earn enormous profits beyond their high production cost. *Star Wars* led directly to the resurrection of the *Star Trek* franchise with *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* (1979) and probably contributed to the success of movies like *Superman* (1978). Such success also bred many imitators. While borrowing heavily from *Star Wars*' space opera feel, films such as *Starcrash* (1978) or *Battle Beyond the Stars* (1980) failed to muster dazzling special effects. Later films such as *The Last Starfighter* (1984) would lift whole plot elements, such as a young man destined to defeat an evil ship with a fatal design flaw.

Many years passed before the next *Star Wars* movie came to the screen. The idea of the prequel stories was hinted at by the opening narrative crawl for *The Empire Strikes Back*, which labeled the film "Episode V." In anticipation of the prequels and in celebration of the 20th anniversary of *Star Wars*, in 1997 the films of the original trilogy were returned to the theaters as special editions. The first film began being known under the new episode title, *A New Hope*. The special editions were not merely rereleased. Lucas changed the films, largely by inserting new special-effects sequences into older scenes. While the narratives went relatively untouched, a controversial change was made to the character of Han Solo in *A New Hope*, when a scene in which Han shot the bounty hunter Greedo was altered to make it appear that Han shot only after being fired upon by Greedo.

The prequel trilogy takes a more tragic direction as the films center on the character of Anakin Skywalker (Jake Lloyd, Hayden Christensen), destined to become the evil Darth Vader. Anakin is mentored in the first film by Jedi Qui-Gon Jinn (Liam Neeson) and then later by young Obi-Wan (Ewan McGregor). Anakin is aided in his adventures, and later has a doomed love affair with Queen Amidala (Natalie Portman).

While the prequels introduce new characters like the Gungan Jar Jar Binks, audiences see earlier versions of favorite characters such as Yoda, R2-D2, C-3PO, Obi-Wan, and Chewbacca.

The narratives of the prequel trilogies establish a more complicated storyline. Senator Palpatine (Ian McDiarmid) is secretly the evil Sith Lord Sidious, the sworn foe of the Jedi. He comes to power by manipulating a war between the Jedi and the clone army of the Republic and battle droid-reliant Trade Guilds (later subsumed into the Separatists). To sow this chaos, Palpatine uses a number of evil agents: Darth Maul (Ray Park) in *Menace*, Count Dooku (Christopher Lee) in *Clones* and *Sith*, and General Grievous (voiced by Matthew Wood). Exploiting the political situation and fears of the power of the Jedi, Palpatine grabs power in the guise of offering order, thus becoming Emperor at the end of the trilogy.

The prequel trilogies have a darker tone as Palpatine also manipulates Anakin with tragic results. Qui-Gon believes that Anakin is the Chosen One, prophesied to bring balance to the Force. Ambitious, Anakin chafes under what he sees as the restrictive training system overseen by Jedi Counselors such as Yoda and Mace Windu (Samuel L. Jackson). Secretly wed to Amidala in *Clones*, Anakin has nightmare visions of his wife's death in *Sith*. Palpatine uses these fears to bring Anakin under his control. Anakin betrays the Jedi, leading a massacre at the Jedi Temple (a controversy among fans as the Temple had youthful trainees). *Sith* concludes on a very down note as Obi-Wan defeats Anakin in battle and a heartbroken Amidala dies giving birth to the twins Luke and Leia. The twins are taken into hiding, establishing the pretext of the original trilogy. The gruesomely injured Anakin is transformed, in a scene reminiscent of *Frankenstein* (1931), into the cyborg Darth Vader.

In 2008, *The Clone Wars* presented an all-CGI adventure set between *Clones* and *Sith*. An accomplished Jedi at this time in the stories, Anakin is given an apprentice of his own to train, the spirited Ahsoka (voiced by Ashley Eckstein).

The Force is an important spiritual concept that runs throughout all of the films. In *Star Wars*, Ben explains that the Force is an energy field that binds all living things. Certain individuals are more connected with the Force than others, allowing them to manipulate the Force. This manipulation grants a number of spectacular powers such as telekinetic and telepathic abilities. Although not antitechnology, the Force is presented as something more useful, and thus more ideal, than technology. The most famous example is Luke switching off his targeting computer and relying on the Force to destroy the Death Star.

The prequels added a more pseudoscientific, and for fans, a more controversial explanation for the Force by introducing the idea of midi-chlorians, microbes that allow the manipulation of the Force. Although not confirmed in the narrative, scenes in *The Phantom Menace* suggest that Anakin may have been a virgin birth, created by the midi-chlorians.

Although Anakin is presented as a messianic figure and the Jedi function in ways similar to the Crusaders in the prequels, the Force is not an orthodox religion along the lines of Western Christianity. In many ways the Force is more like Eastern religions in that it requires contemplative study to master. The Force operates on a simple

dichotomy of good and evil. Students must constantly beware the seduction of the Dark Side of the Force, a fate that some, such as the Sith and Darth Vader, were unable to resist. To avoid this temptation, the practitioner must constantly master his or her emotions.

Interestingly, while the Force and the Jedi are important to the *Star Wars* universe, within the narrative most characters react with skepticism to the Force. Since Luke and Leia are born at the end of *Sith*, the time difference between the end of the prequels and the beginning of the original trilogy is only their age. Yet in that short time, many characters, notably Han Solo, are skeptical of the Force. In the prequels, Palpatine is able to use fear of the Jedi's power in order to scapegoat the group in his own bid for dominance.

Star Wars presents other political and moral arguments outside the Force, although the views are sometimes less coherent. In the original trilogy, the Empire is clearly evil and repressive, with the Rebel Alliance taking the role of heroic underdog. Leia's title of Princess also suggests a monarchy akin to those found in fairy tales. In the prequels both the Republic with its clone warriors and the Trade Guild/Separatists with their droid armies are manipulated by Palpatine. While the Republic eventually becomes the Empire, through most of the prequels the clone warriors are on the side of good due to their association with the Jedi. The political universe of the prequels is more demonstrably democratic, although the films are at pains to explain how Amidala is somehow elected queen. The Republic's demise models the shift from the Roman Republic to the Roman Empire. The vulnerability of this democracy to Palpatine's ambitions is a contemporary warning on the fragile balance between freedom and security.

Personal morality is ultimately important in the *Star Wars* universe, where redemption is a powerful theme. Collectively the films may be read as Anakin Skywalker's tragic fall and salvation through self-sacrifice. Other redemptions can be seen in the films, such as Han Solo's renouncement of materialism when he returns to save Luke in *Star Wars* or Lando Calrissian's seeing beyond self-preservation when he joins the Rebels after betraying them in *Empire Strikes Back*.

Technology is another vital element in *Star Wars*, and there is no way this entry could begin to note all the examples. Although the Jedi teach that the Force is something more meaningful and useful in the universe, technology does all the hard work waging the wars in these stars. The Jedi aren't Luddites; they are best identified by their signature weapons, the lightsaber. Sword surrogates, lightsabers feature in many prominent duels throughout all of the films. Travel in the *Star Wars* universe, be it local or intergalactic, is accomplished easily by a dizzying array of vehicles and warships. Technology even provides important characters in the form of droids.

Special effects are a hallmark of the films. Lucas's companies have been on the cutting edge of developing this movie magic for decades. The original films pioneered the use of models and stop-motion animation. In the rereleases Lucas used computer technology to add more effects to complete his vision. The prequels embraced CGI wizardry, creating whole environments and characters electronically. Two notable examples of this transition are the characters of Yoda and Jabba the Hutt. Puppets

and animatronics in the original films, the characters appeared in the prequels as CGI animation.

While human characters abound in the *Star Wars* universe, one signature element of the franchise is the inclusion of nonhuman characters. In fact, in some crucial ways the narratives of all the films are structured around the adventures of R2-D2 and C-3PO. The duo has a knack for being in just the right place at the right time. *Star Wars'* Cantina Band scene presented an array of aliens hanging out in a bar on Tatooine, and the trend continued from there. From trusty Wookiee co-pilot Chewbacca to Jedi master Yoda, alien beings abound. Although there is some evidence of droid prejudice in the original trilogy, the *Star Wars* universe is truly diverse. Nonhumans hold important positions and roles. A few problems do exist, most notably in Jar Jar Binks, a character that skews painfully close to minstrel show stereotypes.

Music and sound are two more signature aspects of *Star Wars*. Just as the films promoted visual effects, they have also advanced sound effects. Composer and conductor John Williams created the music for all six of the live-action films. Many of the musical leitmotifs have become well known in American culture, particularly the *Star Wars* theme itself and the Imperial March that often accompanies Darth Vader's appearances. In addition to its official releases, *Star Wars* music has been recorded by a number of orchestras in a bid to raise revenues.

Although this entry has by design focused on the films themselves, *Star Wars* is much more than a cinematic experience. From the beginning, Lucas has licensed this franchise into a wide variety of products such as T-shirts, posters, costumes, and light-sabers. Most notable of these are the *Star Wars* action figures. These figures changed the nature of children's toys by promoting a collectible line of characters, vehicles, and play sets that children could use to reenact scenes from the movies or to create their own adventures. Although the toy company Kenner was unable to produce action figures in time for the 1977 holiday season (instead selling IOUs for the figures), these toys have been sold at every holiday season since, with the line expanding to include new elements from all the films.

Star Wars is also an important force in publishing. Alan Dean Foster's 1978 novel *Splinter of the Mind's Eye* was the first original adventure set in the *Star Wars* universe. Countless other books have followed, fleshing out the events between the movies and recounting the further adventures of characters after the films. Marvel Comics produced *Star Wars* comic book adventures during the original trilogy, but the rights have moved on to other companies. There are also many reference books for the series.

Star Wars was also a source for a number of television programs. *The Star Wars Holiday Special* (1978) centered on Chewbacca's family, but although it featured most of the main characters it is not accepted as canon. Never rereleased, the special is a kitschy prize of collectors everywhere. Saturday morning cartoon *Droids* (1985) chronicled the R2-D2 and C-3PO's adventures before the original trilogy, while *Ewoks* (1985) followed the lives of the fuzzy aliens from *Return of the Jedi*. *The Clone Wars* carried directly into an all-CGI show on Cartoon Network in 2008. *Star Wars* is referenced in many other media products. Two prominent cinematic parodies were *Hardware Wars* (1977) and *Spaceballs* (1987). Some programs, such as *Robot Chicken* and *Family*

Guy, have produced entire parodies of *Star Wars* with the permission of, and occasional participation by, Lucas.

Not surprisingly, Lucasfilm's video-game divisions have also produced a number of games in the *Star Wars* universe. There is a massive multiplayer online *Star Wars* game. Various platforms have allowed players to reenact battles from the movies (*Star Wars Battlefront*) or pursue narrative adventures within the spaces of the films (*The Force Unleashed*).

Finally, *Star Wars* was referenced politically when President Ronald Reagan unveiled the Strategic Defense Initiative in 1983. SDI planned to use satellite and Earth-based weaponry to destroy incoming ballistic missile attacks. There are no scenes in the *Star Wars* films that display such moments, so the label was merely an attempt to popularize the idea with the American public.

Few movies have won a place in the hearts and imaginations of viewers the way the *Star Wars* films have. While generations of fans can and do bicker over the movies' narrative inconsistencies, the ubiquity of *Star Wars* in American popular culture and the continued success of their associated products are a testament to the loyalty of those fans.

See also: Lucas, George; Science Fiction Film, The

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—Michael G. Robinson

STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE, A. Elia Kazan's *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951) is a film adaptation of the Tennessee Williams play of the same name. The play, also directed by Kazan, won the Pulitzer Prize, the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award, and a Tony Award. Following on the success of the play, the film received 12 Oscar nominations and helped to make Marlon Brando a Hollywood superstar. Except for Vivien Leigh, all of the actors from the original Broadway production played their stage roles on-screen. Working closely on both the theatre and film productions of *Streetcar*, Williams and Kazan pioneered the concept of subjective realism and opened up discussions of the portrayal of male and female sexuality on stage and screen.

The film centers on Blanche DuBois's gradual descent into madness. After losing the family plantation, Belle Reve, as well as her position as a schoolteacher, Blanche moves to New Orleans to share a two-room apartment in the French Quarter with her sister, Stella Kowalski (Kim Hunter), and her brutish, cynical brother-in-law, Stanley Kowalski (Brando). Tennessee Williams described *A Streetcar Named Desire* as a "tragedy of misunderstandings," and the misunderstandings become apparent from



Marlon Brando and Kim Hunter in a dramatic scene from *A Streetcar Named Desire* written by Tennessee Williams and directed by Elia Kazan. (Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

the very beginning of the picture (Murphy, 1992). Blanche makes it seem as though she took a leave of absence from the school, when in fact, she was terminated after becoming sexually involved with a student. She then accuses Stella of only desiring Stanley sexually, instead of truly loving him; an accusation that rings true on one level, as Stella's relationship with Stanley appears at least partially based on her need for his protection to survive the harsh life of the French Quarter.

Significantly, Blanche gives vague answers to questions or avoids them completely, although she claims to tell the truth in regard to really important matters. While on a date with her ultrasensitive and emotionally unaware suitor Mitch (Karl Malden), she reveals that she feels responsible for the death of her husband, Allan Gray, who publically shot himself at a party after revealing his homosexuality to Blanche. When Mitch confronts her about her past indiscretions, Blanche confesses to "many meetings with strangers," but declares that she "never lied in [her] heart." Mitch chooses to believe Stanley's version of the truth, and so he leaves Blanche to endure life alone. What initially seems like conceit eventually reveals itself to be a defensive strategy employed by Blanche in an attempt to survive an unforgiving, post-World War II American society.

For the film adaptation, director Kazan strove to transfer the stage version to the screen, to include its themes, and insisted on using the Broadway cast in order to keep the integrity of the play intact. Warner Bros., though, wanted Kazan to cast someone with more box-office draw than Jessica Tandy in the role of Blanche, thus the choice of Leigh (Freeman, 1995). Although Kazan reluctantly agreed to the requests of the studio, the film still became a victim of the Hollywood Censorship Office. For fear of receiving a "C," or "condemned" rating from the League of Decency, whose morality code inspired the Hollywood production code, Warner Brothers demanded the deletion of lines and scenes, in addition to a changed ending (Freeman 1995). In the stage version, Stella commits Blanche to an insane asylum and remains with Stanley as a means of survival. In the film version, however, we see a more morally and socially acceptable ending where Stella whispers to her new baby that they are never going back to Stanley again (Thomson, 2003). She then takes the newborn baby in her arms and runs upstairs to the neighbor's apartment. Kazan and Williams both felt that the movie's changed ending ruined the story's effectiveness in that Stella's actions seem absurd in the context of the rest of the film (Freeman, 1995, 28–29). As a whole, *A Streetcar Named Desire* remained controversial, regardless of the producer's cuts. In 1993, Fox released the director's cut of the film that includes three minutes of excised footage that underscored the sexual tension between Stanley and Blanche, as well as Stella's passion for her husband. The film remains a landmark in American film for the social issues it raised during a time of moral consciousness in American culture.

See also: Brando, Marlon; Kazan, Elia; Melodrama, The

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—Jennifer K. Morrison

SULLIVAN'S TRAVELS. Writer and director Preston Sturges's *Sullivan's Travels* (1941) explores the complex operations of socially engaged cinema during the Great Depression, offering a satirical vision of Hollywood. The film focuses on the story of young filmmaker John Lloyd Sullivan, who resists his role as a creator of lighthearted comedies. Sullivan wants instead to produce a hard-hitting socially relevant film titled, "O Brother, Where Art Thou?"

Studio executives reject Sullivan's idea, questioning his ability to produce a worthwhile film. Noting that his model in the genre of socially conscious films is director Frank Capra, they ask Sullivan, "What do you know about hard luck?" They argue that

Sullivan has not experienced the life of the common man and therefore cannot produce a meaningful film about his experience.

In response, Sullivan dons the garb of a hobo and embarks on a disastrous adventure in hopes of understanding the plight of the everyday individual. His butler objects to his plan, arguing that the poor value their privacy. He cautions Sullivan, "Poverty is not the lack of anything, but a positive plague, virulent in itself, contagious as cholera, with filth, criminality, vice, and despair as only a few of its symptoms. It is to be stayed away from, even for purposes of study. It is to be shunned."

Nonetheless, Sullivan departs, pairing up with a failed actress (Veronica Lake) who poses as a young man during their journey. The two travel to Kansas City, where they tour a skid-row district, observing a mission, a flophouse, and a soup kitchen. Sullivan decides to end his project. But first, he wants to distribute cash to the poor, out of gratitude for the lessons he has learned. As he distributes five-dollar bills, one homeless man, who had earlier stolen Sullivan's boots, now knocks him out and steals his money. Sturges refuses Capra's frequently romanticized depiction of the nation's poor, instead, portraying some indigent people as both desperate and violent.

The escaping thief is struck and killed by a passing train. Wearing the stolen boots tagged with Sullivan's identification, he is identified as the director. Meanwhile, during an altercation, Sullivan, now an amnesiac, strikes a railroad yard worker with a rock. He is tried and sentenced to six years in prison. As a prisoner, he encounters a life of hard labor on a chain gang, abuse, and misery. He is taken with other prisoners to an African American church to see a Walt Disney cartoon. Through that experience, he comes to understand and appreciate the value of comedy to those who are suffering. Although his life is one filled with pain, he can still find pleasure in the products of Hollywood. He realizes that his destiny is to return to the studio and produce similarly comedic films.

A darker film than those directed in this era by Capra, *Sullivan's Travels* offered a complex vision of the relationship between art, culture, and society during the Great Depression. Sturges seemed to be saying that everyday Americans were not necessarily either heroes or villains, and should not be painted with a broad brush. Cultural products, such as films, Sturges seemed to contend, need not position themselves heavily as uplifting and educational projects. Instead, they could offer audiences a temporary escape from reality.

Sullivan's Travels demonstrated Sturges's interest in experimenting with narrative structure. Sullivan's four journeys away from Hollywood are each presented in the style of a distinct genre, including physical comedy, melodrama, silent film, and prison film. The film offers audiences a nuanced exploration of the role of cultural production in the lives of everyday Americans. *Sullivan's Travels* received critical acclaim but no Academy Award nominations.

See also: Sturges, Preston

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—Ella Howard

SUNSET BLVD. Billy Wilder’s *Sunset Blvd.* (1950) is one of the great Hollywood movies about movies, rivaled, perhaps, only by *Singin’ in the Rain*. While the latter film is pure joy, *Sunset Blvd.* provides us with dark humor and is ultimately a caustic indictment of the business of Hollywood moviemaking.

The story involves a down-on-his-luck screenwriter named Joe Gillis (William Holden), who turns into the driveway of an old mansion on Sunset Blvd. in Los Angeles, while being chased by two men who are trying to repossess his car. The mansion turns out to belong to Norma Desmond (Gloria Swanson), an aging actress who has never been able to acknowledge her star power has long passed. Indeed, when Joe recognizes her, she denies that she has lost any of her movie star brilliance: “You’re Norma Desmond,” says Joe. “You used to be in silent pictures. You used to be big.” “I *am* big,” responds Norma crossly. “It’s the *pictures* that got small.”

When Norma realizes that Joe is a screenwriter, she hires him to help edit a script she is writing that will provide her a vehicle for her comeback (although when Joe calls it a “comeback,” she memorably snaps, “I hate that word. It’s a return!”). The two form an uneasy interdependent relationship—she needs Joe’s skills as a writer, he needs her money. Joe moves into the house, and the relationship evolves to the point where Joe begins to provide not just his writing acumen, but what can best be described as companionship.

The movie is essentially about how people in Hollywood use each other and how ruthless they are toward one another once they no longer need each other. Early in the story, Joe asks his agent for help in getting a job, or at least to loan him \$200 until he can finish the script that he knows will put him over the top. The agent refuses, telling Joe that the best writing in the world was done on an empty stomach. Although he recognizes that his relationship with Norma is emotionally unhealthy, Joe nevertheless wants Norma’s financial support to continue. In order to deal with his peculiar situation, he begins sneaking out at night to work on his own script with another, female, screenwriter. When Norma discovers this, she threatens suicide; when Joe finally decides to leave for good, she ends up killing him.

A darkly incisive character study, the film has an unsettling noirish sensibility. Wilder had already directed one of the great film noirs six years earlier when he made *Double Indemnity*. Like that earlier film, *Sunset Blvd.* is told in flashbacks with voice-over narration—viewers know the outcome of the story from the very beginning, as



Silent screen star Gloria Swanson stars with William Holden in the biting Hollywood satire *Sunset Blvd.*, directed by Billy Wilder, 1950. (Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

the picture opens with a shot of Joe lying face down in a swimming pool: “The poor dope—he always wanted a pool. Well, in the end, he got himself a pool.” Marked by the shadowy, uncanny—even creepy—interiors of Norma’s mansion, the picture presses in on the viewer, literally and figuratively, as Joe’s ill-advised decisions send him spiraling toward his predetermined death.

Interestingly, Gloria Swanson was herself a well-known silent film star who found it difficult to make the switch to sound films; and Erich von Stroheim, who played her butler Max, although one of the truly great directors of the silent era, was never really able to recover from his disastrous production of *Greed*. Wilder even had the legendary silent film star Buster Keaton sit in as one of Norma’s guests with whom she plays cards—guests whom Joe calls Norma’s “waxworks.”

See also: Film Noir; Wilder, Billy

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—Govind Shanadi

SUPERMAN: THE MOVIE. The 1978 film version of *Superman* was a milestone on many levels: It created a resurgence of a comic book character that had been an icon for 40 years; it established the careers of its stars Christopher Reeve and Margot Kidder; and perhaps most importantly, it ushered in the age of the modern cinematic superhero. The character of Superman had been introduced in *Action Comics #1* in 1938 by creators Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster. In the four decades that followed, the world's first "superhero" went on to star in a long-running radio show, animated cartoon shorts, live-action movie serials, and a 1951 big-screen adventure starring George Reeves, *Superman and the Mole Men*. This latter film would spawn the popular 1950s television show.

The 1978 incarnation was produced by Alexander and Ilya Salkind, with a script by *Godfather* author Mario Puzo, co-written with David and Leslie Newman and Robert Benton. Directed by Richard Donner, the film featured a score by John Williams, hot off of his award-winning score for *Star Wars*. Wanting relative unknowns to fill the starring roles, the Salkinds chose Christopher Reeve and Margot Kidder as the Man of Steel and his love interest, Lois Lane. Gene Hackman brilliantly portrayed Superman's arch-nemesis Lex Luthor. The role of Superman's father, Jor-El, went to screen legend Marlon Brando, who received top billing even though he made only a cameo appearance in the film.

Born as baby Kal-El on the doomed planet of Krypton, the future Superman is shot into space by his parents in an attempt to save him from their fate. Landing in a field outside of Smallville, Kansas, he is found by an elderly couple, Jonathan and Martha Kent, who take the boy in and raise him as their son. As baby "Clark" grows into adulthood, his "second" father dies, leaving him to make his way in a world that is not his own. He emerges a decade later on the streets of Metropolis, seeking a job as a reporter at the local newspaper, the *Daily Planet*. It is there that he meets Lois Lane, as well as other Superman mainstays: editor Perry White and cub reporter Jimmy Olsen. Once he begins fighting crime as Superman, the hero catches the attention of criminal mastermind Lex Luthor, who has researched Superman's origins and discovered his one weakness: irradiated remnants of his long-dead planet: Kryptonite. Superman soon discovers Luthor's plan to buy up thousands of acres of worthless desert properties in the American west, and, using stolen nuclear weapons, to blow up the San Andreas fault line, sending California into the ocean and making his "desert" properties prime coastal real estate. Though successful in stopping Luthor, and saving the lives of those who had been threatened, Superman discovers he is too late to save Lois Lane, who has died in the earthquakes. Disobeying the one rule set down by his real father, Superman uses his powers to reverse the rotation of the planet and turn back time, which, although it allows him to save Lois, also has the ominous effect of "changing human history."

The success of *Superman* was due in large part to the timing of its release. By the end of the 1970s, American morale had descended to one of its lowest points. Having endured the Watergate scandal; the inglorious loss of the Vietnam War; a stagnant economy, exacerbated by a massive energy crisis; and what was increasingly perceived as the failure of the Carter administration, the United States, for one of the few times



Scene from the 1978 film *Superman*, starring Christopher Reeve. Directed by Richard Donner. (Photofest)

in its history, seemed to be bowing its head in shame. The American people needed a hero . . . and *Superman* provided them with one.

Interestingly, the film was released during the lead-up to the era of flag-waving patriotism that defined the Reagan years. Though Superman would ultimately lose much of his appeal as the 1980s increasingly made way for antiheroes like Batman, Wolverine, and the Watchmen, he would never completely disappear from the landscape of the American psyche. Throughout the 1990s, he would be featured in no fewer than five top-10 pop songs. He would emerge again in the wake of the events of September 11, 2001, when, just one week after that tragic day, the WB television network premiered what would become its most popular series, *Smallville*, a show chronicling the adventures of a young Clark Kent, fulfilling his heroic destiny.

See also: Action Adventure Film, The; Science Fiction Film, The; Superhero, The

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—Richard A. Hall

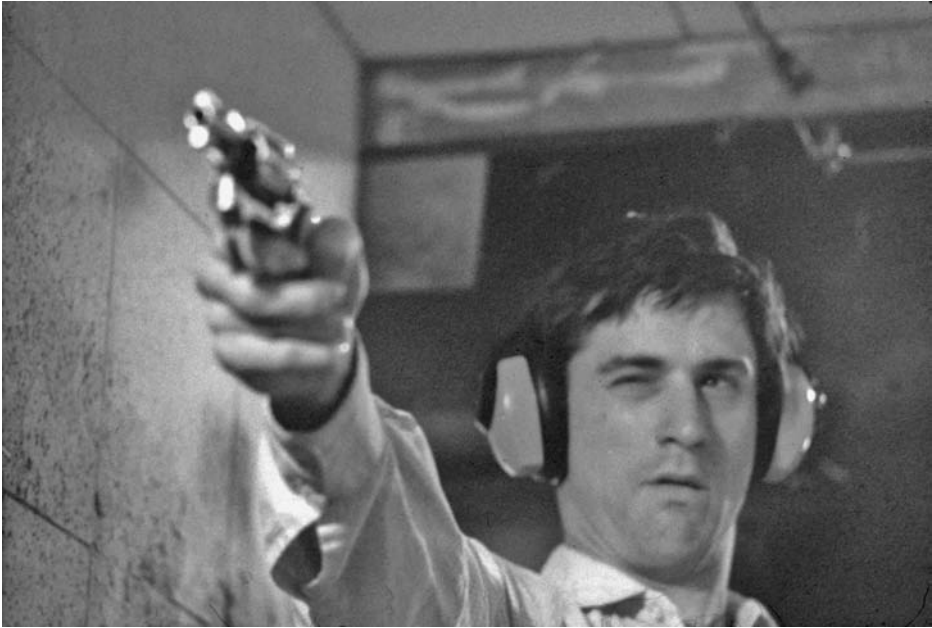
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TAXI DRIVER. *Taxi Driver* (1976) is an Academy Award–winning film directed by Martin Scorsese and starring Robert De Niro as a mentally unstable Vietnam War veteran named Travis Bickle. Bickle drives a cab at night and comes to despise the contemptible people who roam the city streets after dark. The film depicts the tragic consequences of loneliness and alienation as he attempts to “clean up” the streets. *Taxi Driver* is remembered not only for its gritty performances but also as the film that inspired the 1981 attempted assassination of U.S. president Ronald Reagan by John Hinckley, who was obsessed with Jodie Foster, the actress who plays teen prostitute Iris in the film.

Taxi Driver can be defined as a film about failure: personal, cultural, and that of a country engulfed in an unpopular war. While hospitalized, author Paul Schrader was motivated to write the screenplay for *Taxi Driver* while reading newspaper accounts of would-be assassin Arthur Bremer, who shot and paralyzed Alabama governor George Wallace in 1972. After a failed relationship, Bremer began drinking heavily and did not talk to anyone for weeks. Bremer believed that his only means to gain the recognition he coveted was to assassinate someone of distinction, and after failing to penetrate President Richard Nixon’s security zone, he targeted Wallace.

In *Taxi Driver*, Bremer is loosely represented by Bickle, an ex-Marine whose insomnia leads him to a job driving a New York City taxicab at night. His diary expresses his harsh view of what he sees as the squalor and sleaze on the streets. Alienated, awkward in his attempts at relationships, and unable to sleep, he visits the Times Square X-rated movie theaters and watches the screen with a dispassionate gaze. The only people he has a minimal relationship with are a group of fellow taxi drivers, whom he occasionally meets for evening coffee. He consults one of them, Wizard (Peter Boyle), and attempts to explain the dark, evil thoughts he is having.

Several defining moments in the narrative act as a catalyst in setting the motivation for Travis. He meets and pursues beautiful blonde Betsy (Cybill Shepherd), who works in the Manhattan office of presidential candidate and U.S. senator Charles Palantine (Leonard Harris). She is a vision of purity, dressed in a flowing white dress. After observing her from the insulation of his taxi, he meets Betsy in the office and convinces



Robert De Niro points a pistol at a firing range in a still from the film *Taxi Driver*, directed by Martin Scorsese. (Columbia Pictures/Fotos International/Getty Images).

her to have coffee with him. Unable to separate Betsy from his routine, alienated lifestyle, he takes her to an X-rated movie on their first date and she rushes out.

His other meeting with a female is by chance, when Iris, a teenage prostitute, suddenly gets into his taxi and tells him to drive away quickly. Before he can react, she is pulled out of the cab by her pimp, Sport (Harvey Keitel), who drops a \$20 bill on his seat and tells him to forget about what just happened. In his wanderings, Travis again meets Iris and this time befriends her, attempting to convince her to abandon her lifestyle and return home.

One evening Travis picks up Palantine and his aides on their way to an event. During the ride he tells the senator how he feels about the city being a cesspool and how it must be cleaned up. Palantine humors Travis, realizing that he is deranged. In another self-defining incident, Travis, who has purchased an array of assault weapons, confronts an armed robber in a convenience store and shoots him, leaving the unlicensed gun with the store owner before fleeing. Deciding to organize his life and get his body into shape, Travis begins a regimen of lifting weights and doing push-ups and pull-ups. Visiting a Palantine rally, he approaches a Secret Service agent, who becomes suspicious when Travis asks questions about becoming an agent. Travis blends into the crowd before another agent can photograph him.

Back home, in one of the most famous scenes in film, Travis, wearing a green military fatigue jacket, poses in front of a mirror, posturing as a tough guy and repeating the phrase “You talkin’ to me?” while drawing his gun from a forearm spring-loaded

holster. Travis begins to set his life in order, writing a final letter to his parents, articulating his fantasy of living with Betsy and working at a sensitive job with the government. He stuffs \$500 into an envelope intended for Iris, thinking that he will be dead by the time she receives it. Wearing a Mohawk-style haircut, Travis stalks Palantine at a rally with the intent to assassinate him, but flees after being seen by a Secret Service agent.

In a bloodthirsty scene of retribution and symbolic cleansing, Travis confronts Sport outside Iris's apartment and shoots him. He enters the building, shooting the manager, and is wounded in the neck by Sport, whom he kills. Then he is shot in the arm by Iris's customer, whom he shoots in the face and chest. He wrestles with the manager and, after subduing him in front of Iris, he tries to shoot himself under the chin but is out of bullets. As the police enter he puts his bloody trigger finger to his head and mimics the sound of a shot.

The media pay tribute to him as a hero who rescued the young Iris from her involuntary servitude. He is lauded as a purveyor of vigilante justice, cleaning the city of its filth. In the last scene he is the next taxi in line at the St. Regis Hotel as Betsy enters the cab. They say little, and when they reach her apartment, Travis refuses to accept Betsy's offer to pay the fare and he drives away, taking a last glance of her in the rearview mirror.

Taxi Driver received high critical acclaim and was nominated for four Oscars at the 1977 Academy Awards presentation, including Best Actor (De Niro), Best Supporting Actress (Foster), Best Original Score, and Best Picture.

See also: De Niro, Robert; Scorsese, Martin

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—James Roman

TERMINATOR SERIES, THE. *The Terminator* (1984), James Cameron's low-budget science fiction film featuring a relentless cyborg killer from the future, captured the zeitgeist of early 1980s America by reflecting the culture's ambivalence toward technology at the dawn of the digital revolution. The surprise success of the film set the stage for numerous sequels, and launched a franchise that continues to generate spin-off products in a wide variety of media formats.

The terminator character has become synonymous with Arnold Schwarzenegger, who played the T-800 cyborg assassin in the first film. Born in the small town of Thal, Austria, Schwarzenegger achieved international fame as a bodybuilder, winning the Mr. Universe title five times and Mr. Olympia title seven times between 1966 and 1980. He began his acting career with *Hercules in New York* (1970) and appeared in numerous other films before becoming a serious box-office draw in *Conan the*



Scene from the 1984 film *The Terminator*, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger. Directed by James Cameron. (Photofest)

Barbarian (1982). For *The Terminator*, Schwarzenegger was initially offered the role of the hero, but chose the role of the flesh-covered robot villain instead, using his muscle-bound physique and thick Austrian accent to define the character of the unstoppable killing machine. Schwarzenegger's portrayal of the terminator made him one of the world's most popular action movie stars of the next two decades.

The film was also a career launcher for James Cameron, who, prior to *The Terminator*, had only directed one feature film, *Piranha II: The Spawning* (1981). After *The Terminator*, Cameron went on to direct many popular Hollywood movies, including the enormously successful *Titanic* (1997), which won 11 Academy Awards and is one of the top-grossing motion pictures of all time. He also directed *The Terminator's* sequel, *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (1991). For *The Terminator*, Cameron shares screenwriting credits with Gale Anne Hurd,

who also produced the film and married Cameron a year after its release. The story was largely based on two 1964 episodes of the television show *The Outer Limits* written by Harlan Ellison, entitled "Soldier," and "Demon with a Glass Hand." Cameron's influence is most obvious in *The Terminator's* special effects which, despite a modest budget of only \$6.4 million, achieved a convincing vision of a dystopic future that rivaled films with larger budgets, such as Ridley Scott's classic *Blade Runner* (1981).

The Terminator begins in Los Angeles in 2029. A sophisticated computer system called Skynet has started World War III as a way of eliminating all human life. Some humans have survived to wage war against the machines. Skynet has created an army of cyborgs to infiltrate and kill off these human resistors, but it realizes that in order to win against the humans it must eliminate their leader, John Connor, before he is born. Skynet sends the T-800 back in time to kill John's mother, Sarah Connor (Linda Hamilton), before she conceives. To protect his mother from the T-800, John sends

Kyle Reese (Michael Biehn) back in time. Kyle finds Sarah just before the T-800, saying, "Come with me if you want to live." Kyle and Sarah then flee from the T-800 and hide out in a hotel room where Kyle confesses that he has always loved Sarah. They consummate their relationship (conceiving John in the process), and ultimately confront the T-800 in a final showdown in which Kyle is killed, but Sarah manages to crush the T-800 in a compactor.

Like many dystopic science fiction films, *The Terminator* bristles with strong undercurrents of technophobia. Throughout the film there are scenes where machines break down or fail to help human beings. Telephones, a police radio, an answering machine, a walkman, all play a role in either assisting the T-800 in its quest to find Sarah, or preventing victims from recognizing the danger the T-800 presents. In addition, the T-800 consistently uses automobiles and a panoply of weapons against human beings. The most enduring image of the relentless incursion of technology into everyday American life is the T-800 itself, particularly when its flesh is burned off and it continues to pursue Sarah as a robotic skeleton.

Despite its dark, technophobic undertones, *The Terminator* is not without humor, and the credit for this must be given to Schwarzenegger, whose deadpan delivery and heavy Austrian accent turned throwaway lines of dialogue into memorable snippets of popular vernacular. Before crashing a car into the police station where Sarah is being held in protective custody, the T-800 politely asks a clerk if he may see Sarah Connor. When he is told he will have to wait, the T-800 looks around the room, and in a flat mechanical voice says, "I'll be back." The phrase would become not only the signature line of the movie, but also a forecaster of numerous *Terminator* sequels, and an indicator of the cultural longevity of Arnold Schwarzenegger. For legal and technical reasons it took seven years, but eventually the terminator did come back.

Terminator 2: Judgment Day is one of the few sequels that is generally regarded as being superior to the original. Written by Cameron and William Wisher, *T2* was the most expensive movie of its time with a budget exceeding \$100 million, but it made more than five times its cost in worldwide box-office sales. Its special effects helped to pioneer a new era of computer-generated imagery that would be seen in later films such as Steven Spielberg's *Jurassic Park* (1993). Along with its popular success, *T2* won Academy Awards for soundtrack, visual special effects, sound effects, and make-up. The key to its success, however, is that it does not merely repeat the themes of the first film. Instead, it takes the technophobic theme and reverses it, showing that technology can also be used to benefit human beings.

T2 takes place 13 years after the original *Terminator*. This time two cyborgs are sent back to present day Los Angeles. One is a T-800 (Schwarzenegger) that the John Connor of the future has captured, reprogrammed, and sent back to protect the 13-year old John Connor (Edward Furlong) from the T-1000, Skynet's newest terminator. The T-1000 (Robert Patrick) is even more dangerous than the T-800. Composed of "liquid metal," the T-1000 can resume its original shape after being shot, burned, or crushed, and can even shape-shift to take the form of other humans of similar size. Robert Patrick's clean-cut looks and policeman's uniform make the T-1000 less menacing than the bulky, foreign accented Schwarzenegger was in the first film.

At the same time, its impressive ability to shape-shift undermines the technophobic subtext of the first *Terminator* with its seductive visual spectacle.

In addition to the T-1000's stunning liquid metal effects, the T-800's role reversal from assassin to protector contributes to an overall positive view of technology in *T2*. Schwarzenegger plays the T-800 like a father figure to the young John Connor, and even sacrifices himself at the end, descending into a cauldron of molten steel so that Cyberdyne, the company that eventually develops Skynet, will not be able to use his technology. This opposite characterization of the T-800 reflected Schwarzenegger's new image as one of the most popular action heroes in the world. He had even proved himself a competent comedian in *Twins* (1988), and *Kindergarten Cop* (1990), and his role in *T2* shows this change as well, with many comic lines coming from his imitation of John Connor's teenage slang. In one scene, before shooting the T-1000, he sardonically utters another phrase that would enter the cultural lexicon, "Hasta la vista, Baby."

Another character who changed radically from the original *Terminator* was Sarah Connor, again played by Linda Hamilton. At the beginning of *T2*, Sarah is being held in a maximum-security insane asylum because she is obsessed with trying to prevent World War III. Apart from her mental change, Sarah is also physically transformed. When we first see her, she is doing pull-ups in a sleeveless tank top. She has progressed from a docile, stereotypically feminine woman who needs to be protected by Kyle Reese in the first film, into a lean, muscular killer who, in many ways, takes on the traits of a cyborg terminator. She also has a single-minded ambition to kill Miles Dyson (Joe Morton), the man responsible for the development of Skynet, and sets out to do so with a laser-sighted rifle reminiscent of the laser-sight the T-800 trained on her in the first film. Just before "terminating" Dyson in front of his family, Sarah regains her humanity, and together with John and the T-800, recruits Dyson to help destroy the Cyberdyne offices.

The strong characterization of Sarah Connor in *T2* takes up the latent feminism of the first movie and expands it. Where Sarah requires Kyle's training in the first film before she can kill the T-800, by the second film Sarah has become an action heroine in her own right. Since she is also the narrator of the second film, Sarah has voice-over authority in the depiction of the story events as well. The third *Terminator* movie would go even further in depicting a powerful female character, but it would not be Sarah Connor. Instead, the strong female character is a new cyborg killer.

Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines (2003) was the first *Terminator* film not written and directed by James Cameron. Jonathan Mostow, fresh from helming *U-571* (2000), agreed to direct after Cameron turned it down. The story does not differ substantially from *T2*, but John Connor (Nick Stahl) is older; Sarah Connor has died; and, along with the T-800 (Schwarzenegger), who is sent to protect Connor again, a newer T-X, "terminatrix" (Kristanna Loken), is sent to kill Connor and anyone who might assist him in the future. The T-X has the same shape-shifting abilities that the T-1000 had, but can also remotely control other machines. Connor and his future wife, Kate Brewster (Claire Danes), try to prevent Skynet's nuclear war, but in the end, are only able to hide out in an underground base station and wait it out.

Despite Schwarzenegger's star power, and an enormous budget of \$200 million, *T3* was not able to turn a profit during its theatrical run in the United States. For many, the third *Terminator* film had lapsed into parody. A typical example occurs in the beginning. In each film, the naked T-800 confronts the first people it meets in order to acquire clothing. In the original film, the T-800 violently dispatches a trio of street punks. In *T2*, the T-800 enters a biker bar, where the thugs are considerably tougher, but again, defeats them. By the third film, the T-800 repeats this same performance in a club for male strippers, where his nudity is applauded as part of the act, and he is told to "talk to the hand," when he asks for one of the stripper's clothes.

Despite the shortcomings of *T3*, it showed that after two decades, there was still plenty of interest in the franchise. *Terminator 4: Salvation* was released in 2009. It starred Christian Bale as John Connor, with Roland Kickinger, another Austrian body-builder, playing the part of the T-800. Beyond the four films, the *Terminator* franchise has produced novels, video games, and a Fox television series entitled *Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles*, which stars Lena Headey as Sarah Connor and Thomas Dekker as a teenage John Connor. With all of these spin-offs, the influence of the time-traveling terminator will likely continue long into the future.

See also: Action Adventure Film, The; Science Fiction Film, The

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—Joseph Christopher Schaub

THELMA AND LOUISE. Directed by Ridley Scott—best known at the time for such slick sci-fi thrillers as *Alien* and *Blade Runner*—*Thelma and Louise* burst on the scene in 1991, garnering immediate, though not universal, critical and popular acclaim. The film tells the story of Thelma (Geena Davis), a housewife whose spirit seems to be largely stifled by her domineering husband Darryl (Christopher McDonald), and Louise (Susan Sarandon), an unmarried waitress whose obvious strength masks a trauma hidden deep within her past; it follows them through a series of serio-comic adventures that begin when they go off on what they think will be a relaxing two-day road trip. Callie Khouri wrote the original screenplay, and wanted to direct the film herself, but was unable to find a studio willing to produce it until Scott agreed to direct it for MGM—an arrangement Khouri approved on the condition that Scott promise not to change her ending. The film features performances by Brad Pitt, in his first role in a major Hollywood production, Harvey Keitel, and Michael Madsen.

Thelma and Louise's little trip takes an unexpected turn when Thelma is nearly raped by a man with whom she's flirted in a bar (Timothy Carhart) and Louise



Scene from the 1991 film *Thelma and Louise*, starring Susan Sarandon (left) and Geena Davis. Directed by Ridley Scott. (Photofest)

intervenes, shooting and killing the attacker. Convinced that their story of self-defense would never be believed by the authorities, Thelma and Louise decide to flee to Mexico. On the way, they meet a charming thief, J. D. (Pitt), who ends up seducing Thelma, teaching her how he commits robberies, and stealing all of the women's money. As their flight gets more desperate, Thelma and Louise embrace the life of care-free outlaws, and for a time manage to evade capture by both the FBI and a sympathetic local detective (Keitel). Ultimately, however, their attempts to escape the authorities prove futile, and they choose the only option that they feel is left to them—they literally fly off a cliff in their car. Although Scott, in a shot reminiscent of George Roy Hill's final shot in another outlaw-buddy-movie, *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, freezes the frame with Thelma, Louise, and their car in midflight over a deep ravine, we can only assume that our protagonists have been set free from their tragically oppressive lives by dying.

For the most part, *Thelma and Louise* was received by both critics and the filmgoing public with wild enthusiasm. In particular, it was praised for its appropriation and subversion of numerous well-established cinematic genres, including the buddy film, the road film, the outlaw-couple-on-the-run film, and the female friendship film. It was hailed as a feminist manifesto, a celebration of Thelma and Louise's refusal to be determined by the demands of a patriarchal society, as embodied in the conventions of both personal relationships and a legal system that all too often fails to protect female victims of male violence. However, it also generated a great deal of controversy, with

numerous critics taking it to task for its violence and its derogatory—even, ironically, essentialist—depictions of men.

The question of whether or not *Thelma and Louise* is really a feminist film continues to be debated, particularly in academic circles where scholars have been writing about and discussing the film since it was released two decades ago. Building on the feminist film theory of Laura Mulvey, much of the scholarly criticism related to *Thelma and Louise* focuses on the extent to which the film is or is not successful in contributing to the construction of a female gaze that subverts the male gaze that, for Mulvey and others, structures cinematic viewing pleasure. Khouri herself has argued that *Thelma and Louise* are not feminists but outlaws, yet she also acknowledges that she wrote the film because she was tired of the predominance of passive roles for women in American cinema—an acknowledgment that suggests the implicit, if not explicit, feminist agenda of the film.

Thelma and Louise received numerous awards, and even more award nominations. Screenwriter Khouri won an Academy Award and a Writers Guild Award for Best Screenplay Written Directly for the Screen, and a Golden Globe Award for Best Screenplay, Motion Picture. Davis and Sarandon were both nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actress in a Leading Role, and for the Golden Globe Award for Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture. The film also received Academy Award nominations for Best Director, Best Cinematographer (Adrian Biddle), and Best Film Editing (Thom Noble), as well as a Golden Globe nomination for Best Motion Picture, Drama.

The 2003 DVD release of *Thelma and Louise* includes a 2001 documentary in three parts, *Thelma and Louise: The Last Journey*, featuring timely interviews with Scott, Khouri, and several key cast members; 30 minutes of footage deleted from the theatrical release; and an alternate ending with commentary from Scott. The DVD continues to generate sales well into the second decade of the film's life, suggesting that *Thelma and Louise* still resonates with the American moviegoing public.

See also: Male Gaze, The; Mulvey, Laura; Scott, Ridley

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—Judith Poxon

THIRD MAN, THE. Adapted from Graham Greene's novel of the same name, Carol Reed's *The Third Man* (1949) is a noir thriller set in the divided city of Vienna after World War II. Holly Martins (Joseph Cotton), a writer of pulp-fiction westerns, is invited to Vienna by an old school friend, Harry Lime (Orson Welles). Accepting

the invitation, Holly arrives in Vienna only to find that Harry has died under mysterious circumstances, apparently related to smuggled penicillin. Unnerved by stories he begins to hear about Harry and the black market trade of penicillin, Holly sets about clearing his friend's name.

Filmed in 1948, shortly after the end of World War II, *The Third Man* was released at the point where the Cold War relationship between the Soviet Union and the United States was becoming increasingly tense. As early as 1946, the prescient Winston Churchill had warned that an "Iron Curtain" was descending across Eastern Europe; and in 1947, George Kennan sent his infamous "Long Telegram" to President Truman, detailing what he called the policy of "containment." By 1949, Mao and the communists had come to power, and Truman was being accused of "losing China."

The film explores what was a real black market in stolen and adulterated drugs in an occupied city. In Vienna, large amounts of these drugs were moved by criminals through the city's massive underground sewer system—the mazelike system was also used by criminals to slip from one sector of the city to another. The Austrian authorities actually put together a special unit of sewer police, which was depicted in the film's climactic chase scenes. Interestingly, because the film's producer, David O. Selznick, felt that the original script was marked by anti-American sensibilities, he insisted that a plotline that had Americans involved in Lime's gang be eliminated and that Lime's nationality not be revealed—leaving Holly Martins as the lone well-intentioned American who would set things right.

Viewers identified with the openness and optimism of Martins, who embodied the notion that American energy and dedication could rescue something worthwhile from tired old Vienna—much as the American military had rescued Europe from its worst wartime nightmare. Martins even characterizes himself as being like the hero of one of his novels, *The Lone Rider of Santa Fe*. Things were not as simple as they seemed, however, as the Vienna of *The Third Man* ended up being considerably darker and wilder than the pulp-fiction westerns penned by the naive Martins.

Interestingly, although the film is marked by an explicit sense of technical and psychological darkness, it is nevertheless redemptive at its core. In the end, *The Third Man* is very much about saving individuals—Anna from life in a communist state, children from the effects of impure drugs, and Martins from being murdered. Indeed, even Martins's misguided attempt to save his friend's reputation, his merciful ending of that friend's suffering, and Anna's steadfast loyalty to her criminal boyfriend and refusal to take up with Martins affirm the value of human relationships.

See also: Hard-Boiled Detective Film, The; Welles, Orson

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—W. M. Hagen

THREE KINGS. The U.S.-led international military coalition's goal during the Gulf War, Americans were told, was to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi occupation and to prevent further aggression by Iraq's despotic leader, Saddam Hussein. U.S. military action, dominated by Operation Desert Storm, began in mid-January 1991. Six short weeks later, President George H. W. Bush declared victory. Reports of a high civilian death toll, environmental damage caused by oil spills and oil fires, and Hussein's continuing attacks on Kurds and Shiite Muslims dampened the celebration for some on the home front. However, largely because fewer than 300 American troops died, the war did not generate the same level of controversy in the United States as did Vietnam or even Ronald Reagan's interventions in Central America in the 1980s. Desert Storm Commander Norman Schwarzkopf returned home a war hero, and on March 1 President Bush exclaimed, "By God, we've kicked the Vietnam syndrome once and for all." While this triumphalist view permeated American media and popular culture during the decade between the Gulf War and September 11, 2001, David O. Russell's bracing *Three Kings* (1999) represents an important exception.

A unique blend of acerbic black humor and earnest moral inquiry, *Three Kings* is set in the aftermath of Operation Desert Storm. Immediately questioning the idea that the Gulf War represented a clean break from Vietnam, the film's second scene shows soldiers marking their victory by dancing to Rare Earth's 1971 hit "I Just Want to Celebrate." During the party, a journalist tells Special Forces officer Major Archie Gates (George Clooney) a rumor that Iraqis are keeping gold stolen from Kuwait in nearby bunkers; the following day, troops find a map to the bunkers on the body of an Iraqi prisoner. Gates, who earlier tells another officer, "I don't know what we did here," decides that if he is not going to find meaning in the war, he can at least try to find enrichment, and he leads three soldiers on a mission to resteal the gold. What begins like a hijinks-filled heist picture shifts dramatically after the foursome witnesses an Iraqi soldier execute the wife of an anti-Saddam leader. Suddenly, the need to protect refugees begins to compete with the search for gold. "Bush told the people to rise up against Saddam," Gates explains. "They thought they'd have our support—they don't. Now they're getting slaughtered." Will these soldiers do the right thing?

If the most famous Vietnam films retreated from the simple patriotism of World War II movies by portraying troubled soldiers succumbing to the complexity and terror of war, *Three Kings* depicts the immediate aftermath of the Gulf War both as a surreal, media-managed situation and one in which the moral choices are so clear that even four American men looking for action like frat boys on a Saturday night can manage them. Unlike World War II movie heroes or the tortured souls of many Vietnam films, *Three Kings'* protagonists remain average GI Joes throughout, only half-believing they will find the riches that will enable them to quit their low-status jobs back home. Like the Vietnam War, the Gulf War was fought by the working class,

yet this film's signifiers of class are humorous and ironic. The soldiers are not Michael Cimino's primal deer hunters or stand-ins for America in the manner of the broken fighting men of *Born on the Fourth of July*. Instead, Vig (Spike Jonze) is shown back home practicing his marksmanship by shooting stuffed animals with a sawed-off shotgun, and Elgin's (Ice Cube) service to his country represents, as a freeze-frame caption reads, "a four-month paid vacation from Detroit."

The comedy in *Three Kings* is complimented by sympathetic portrayals of Iraqi refugees that won accolades from Middle Eastern Americans, and by Russell's anatomical depictions of violence. In one of the film's signature scenes, Gates responds to the troops' desire for action by asking if they know what happens when one suffers a bullet wound. As the camera moves inside the body of one of the soldiers, we see a bullet rip through tissue and generate bright green bile, producing the kind of footage seen regularly over the past decade on television shows such as *CSI* and *House, MD*. Although it can be jolting watching *Three Kings*' unusual blend of realism and surrealism, of satire and sincerity, the film provides strong evidence that post-Cold War warfare demands postmodern filmmaking.

See also: War Film, The

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—Kenneth F. Maffitt

TITANIC. *Titanic* was initially perceived as a disaster waiting to happen—again. During production, rumors circulated about problems on the set, an obsessed director, and production budget overruns. The unprecedented commercial success of the film changed all that. Released in December 1997, *Titanic* was the first movie to gross more than \$1 billion worldwide. Reviewers subsequently recast the record-breaking cost of production (\$200 million) as a sign of the film's quality. Director James Cameron was heralded as an auteur and a stickler for historical authenticity. The film went on to win 11 Academy Awards, including Best Picture and Best Director.

Critics and scholars offer various explanations for the film's extraordinary popularity with audiences: the mix of genre elements; the lavish visual style; the narrative frame linking past and present; the teen heartthrob status of Leonardo DiCaprio; the savvy marketing of the soundtrack, including the hit song by Celine Dion; and nostalgia for the big-budget epic romances of the past. Although there may be no single explanation for the *Titanic* phenomenon, the film's appeal to both female and male viewers is significant. *Titanic* is representative of a contemporary production trend in Hollywood: female-centered action-adventure films designed to woo female viewers without alienating male viewers, the genre's core audience.



Scene from the 1997 film *Titanic*, starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet. Directed by James Cameron. (Photofest)

In the film, Rose's (Kate Winslet) oppression as an upper-class woman is opposed to Jack's (DiCaprio) freedom as a working-class man. One scene in particular captures the sense of freedom that Jack has and Rose wants. Jack, along with Fabrizio (Danny Nucci), a friend from steerage, climbs up on the bow of the ship in order to experience the exhilaration of speed and movement as the *Titanic* sets out for America, full steam ahead. As pistons engage, dolphins leap, and heavily synthesized music swells, Fabrizio, the hopeful immigrant, shouts excitedly that he can "see the Statue of Liberty already," while Jack throws his arms open wide and declares himself "the king of the world." This is a sensation scene, designed less for advancing the narrative than to evoke the feelings associated with being alive—with being a male body in the world, specifically. The extent to which that body might be oppressed by virtue of its class status is elided in the film. Instead, oppression is located with Rose and the constraints of her experience as a woman on the "upper deck."

Rose's attempts to fight back against gender oppression are linked with the women's suffrage movement in America. In one scene, Rose and her family members dine with Ismay (Jonathan Hyde), managing director of White Star Lines, and Andrews (Victor Garber), *Titanic*'s designer. Ismay boasts that *Titanic* is "the largest moving object ever made by the hand of man in all of history," while Andrews, of a more modest demeanor, displaces the credit due to him for having designed the ship by referring to the grandiosity of Ismay's idea: "He envisioned a steamer so grand in scale and so

luxurious in its appointments that its supremacy would never be challenged.” Rose reacts to the idea of “supremacy that can never be challenged” by doing just that. She lights a cigarette—the sign of a suffragist in 1912 America—as a subtle challenge to the patriarchal supremacy implicit in Ismay’s idea. Ruth (Frances Fisher), Rose’s mother, immediately chastises her for lighting up, while Cal (Billy Zane), her fiancé, snatches the cigarette out of her mouth and extinguishes it. Ruth and Cal are melodramatic villains, upholding oppressive gender ideologies that the film will work to overcome.

In addition to adopting the attitude of the suffragette, Rose gradually begins to manifest the physical freedom associated with the working-class man. She is transformed into an action heroine—literally becoming like Jack in a type-scene repeat in which she is allowed to become “king of the world” on the soaring bow of the ship. In another scene, Jack is not only trapped within the sinking ship, he is melodramatically trapped within the trap, handcuffed to a pipe on a lower deck that is quickly filling with water. It is up to Rose to save him, which she does, in the nick of time. In another scene, with Rose in the lead, she and Jack attempt to outrun a deluge but are swept underwater and deposited against a locked gate. Miraculously, a steward appears and, with trembling hands, tries to unlock the gate, once again invoking the narrative question central to suspense: will he release them in the nick of time or will he be too late? When the steward drops the keys and flees in a panic, Jack dives underwater and recovers them, escalating the suspense. “What one is it, Rose?” he cries, abiding by the gender politics of the film, which resist letting the male character take over at the expense of the female hero. Rose cleverly identifies the correct key in the nick of time.

In the final scenes of the film, Cameron prepares us for the possibility of Rose’s death but also invites us to “let go” via the sensory and emotional experience of film entertainment. “The former world has passed away,” announces a priest as passengers kneel and pray while struggling to hold onto him. The next shot depicts the body of a young woman in a diaphanous white gown floating weightlessly in her underwater grave. This image is followed by shots of the ship tipping upright, stern over bow. One after another, passengers let go, screaming, and slide down the deck of the ship, in a manner reminiscent of an amusement park ride. This effect continues as the ship snaps in two. The stern plunges and then is upended once again, giving passengers (and members of the audience) the roller coaster ride of their lives.

The connection between death and film entertainment as conduits for “letting go” is confirmed as Jack climbs over the railings of the ship and positions himself “overboard,” as it were, inviting Rose to join him. “Give me your hand. I’ve got you. I won’t let go,” he exclaims. The ship bobs momentarily, as if waiting for Jack and Rose to secure themselves in their seats, and then begins its final, spectacular plunge. “This is it!” Jack declares. This is the moment toward which the film has been building: the moment of death, facilitated by the film’s most thrilling special effects. The ship plunges vertically into the water and disappears from the horizon for the last time. Pulled along in the ship’s wake, Jack and Rose struggle to hold onto each other, but are forced to let go. Making their way to the surface, Jack guides Rose to a piece of floating debris and helps her onto it while remaining nearby, submerged in the icy

water. He then enlists her in promising that she'll "survive," that she'll "never give up, no matter what happens, no matter how hopeless," that she'll "never let go." Clutching Jack's trembling hand, Rose agrees to "never let go." The irony, of course, is that in order to keep her promise to survive, she must eventually "let go" of Jack in death. She releases him into the icy depths, and viewers into the experience of pathos and heightened emotion.

Rose is eventually rescued and delivered to the safety of America's harbor. From her position on *Carpathia's* steerage deck, gazing on the Statue of Liberty, she declares her new name, rejecting the values of her repressive past. As Rose Dawson, she will lead an emancipated life, doing all the things she had once asked Jack to teach her—"to ride like a man, chew tobacco like a man, spit like a man"—all of which depend on the freedom of the non-corseted body. That she does indeed lead a nontraditional life for a woman, a life of adventure, is evidenced by a collection of framed photographs gathered next to her deathbed: Rose deep-sea fishing, Rose piloting an airplane, Rose riding a horse, and so on. The photos are offered as proof that she has experienced the exhilarating sensations associated with being "king of the world."

See also: Melodrama, The; Women in Film

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—Carol Donelan

TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD. Based on the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel by Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962) explores the role of racism in the South during the Great Depression. Although the novel and the film were set in a fictional town based on Lee's childhood home in 1930s Monroeville, Alabama, the picture debuted at the height of the 1960s civil rights movement and provided audiences a glimpse of southern society struggling with the haunting legacy of perverse tradition, fear, and racial hierarchy. Directed by Robert Mulligan and starring Gregory Peck, *To Kill a Mockingbird* represented an attempt to break free from the destructive stereotypes that had characterized earlier films set in the South. Whereas, for example, pictures such as *Gone with the Wind* had focused on antebellum plantation life, and others, such as *A Streetcar Named Desire*, had portrayed the South as a decadent, repressed region of America, the critically acclaimed *Mockingbird* emphasized the courageous role of Atticus Finch (Gregory Peck), a southern white attorney who acted as a filmic representative of both the civil rights movement and the possibility of the South's eventual integration into national life.

To Kill a Mockingbird revolves around the experiences of Scout, the young daughter of Atticus Finch, who functions as the cinematic bridge figure through whom the film's two parallel narratives are connected. The first of these narratives focuses on the efforts



Actor Gregory Peck, as Atticus Finch, stands in a courtroom in a scene from director Robert Mulligan's film *To Kill a Mockingbird*, 1962. (Universal Studios/Courtesy of Getty Images)

of Scout (Mary Badham), her older brother Jem (Phillip Alford), and a neighborhood friend to uncover the mystery of Arthur “Boo” Radley (Robert Duvall), a young man rarely seen outside his nearby house and assumed to be strange and dangerous. The second narrative focuses on Finch, who, while the children struggle with their fear of the unknown, finds himself defending Tom Robinson (Brock Peters), an innocent black man accused of sexually assaulting a young white woman named Mayella Ewell (Collin Wilcox). Although Finch protects Robinson from a local lynch mob and ably defends him during the dramatic trial, Robinson is convicted for violating the region’s racial mores and is eventually killed trying to escape before Finch can appeal the questionable verdict. The children join the town in following the trial and observe the hostility of the larger white community, especially Robert E. Lee “Bob” Ewell, the father of the woman who falsely accused Robinson of rape in order to hide her own romantic and scandalous interest in the defendant. The two narratives intersect to create a pivotal moment in the lives of Scout and Jem when a vengeful Buell attacks the children only to be killed by Boo Radley, the misunderstood recluse.

To Kill a Mockingbird provided 1960s America with a poignant morality tale, one that sought to demonstrate that racial redemption could be achieved through the expression of understanding, tolerance, and compassion. Interestingly, however, even though it raised important questions about race in America, it is clear today that the

film still did not go far enough in breaking down the destructive racial stereotypes that had dominated earlier pictures. Tom Robinson, for instance, remains largely a mute and marginalized figure, almost wholly defined by his paternalistic relationship to Atticus Finch; and while the film's description of the explicit injustice of southern society at least hinted at white America's deepest fears of the mythos of black male sexual perversity, the plot almost completely neglects the pervasive structural racism and rigid class hierarchy that often dominated southern life.

Thus, although the film seemed powerful during the early 1960s, as the civil rights movement allowed Americans to embrace the ideal of interracial cooperation, as the movement collapsed and the seemingly intractable challenges of race and class remained unresolved, the film's depiction of the promise of an enlightened white America appear less and less realistic.

See also: African Americans in Film; Ethnic and Immigrant Culture Filmmaking

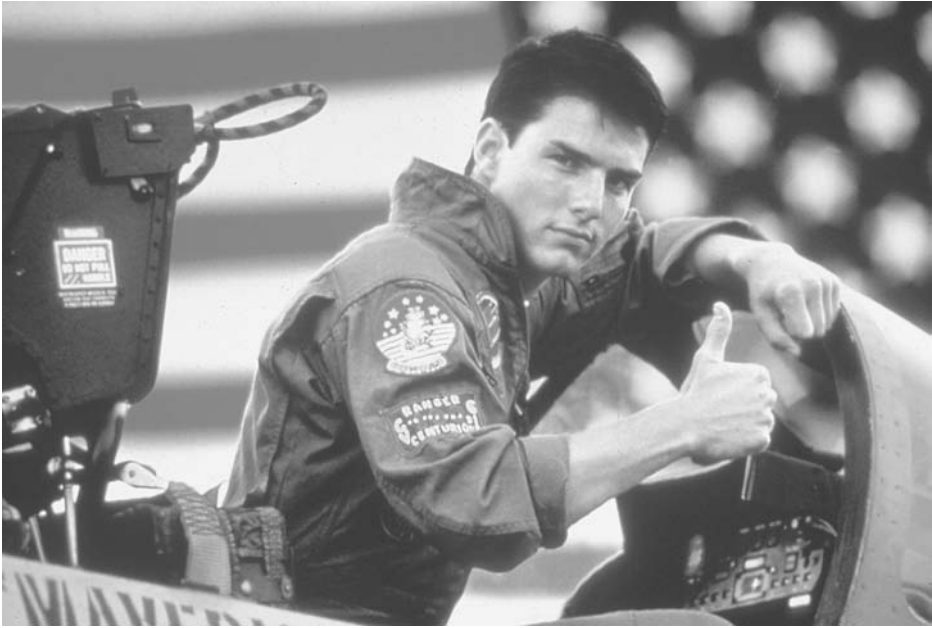
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—Richard L. Hughes

TOP GUN. The top ticket seller of 1986, *Top Gun*, won an Oscar for Best Original Song for "Take My Breath Away," and received Oscar nominations for Best Sound Effects Editing, Best Film Editing, and Best Sound. Though a box-office success, most critics dismissed it as a blatant representation of Reaganite values—it was anticommunist, individualist, militarist, morally unambiguous, nationalistic, and triumphalist. To be sure, critics also derided it as superficial filmmaking. The movie's success, they believed, was based solely in its pop musical and especially in its visual appeal.

Top Gun reflected President Ronald Reagan's and his right-leaning constituency's desire for a reassertion of American triumphalism. This was a stark contrast from the 1970s political and cultural "crisis of confidence." From a foreign policy perspective, burying the Vietnam War—by attributing the loss to both bureaucrats and an overreliance on technology, not a superior enemy—and reasserting American power were crucial to the reconstruction of American triumphalism. Like Reagan, a devout anti-communist who revived the Cold War, Reaganite cinema reasserted American power by reengaging and even defeating the communists. *Top Gun* epitomized this effort. And like Reagan, who viewed the United States as righteous and the Soviet Union as an "evil empire," *Top Gun* reflected his morally unambiguous view of the Cold War. In the aerial combat scenes, the light-colored (good) American F-14 Tomcats are contrasted against the dark-colored (evil) Soviet MIGs. The MIG pilots' faces are covered by dark visors; they are faceless, whereas we see the faces of the American pilots, and their names are written on the top of their helmets. These factors, in addition to filming



Scene from the 1986 film *Top Gun*, starring Tom Cruise. Directed by Tony Scott. (Photofest)

the MIGs only at a distance, serve to depersonalize and, therefore, dehumanize the enemy—the American pilots are fighting evil, not people (Palmer, 2003).

Yet *Top Gun* is not simply a military contest, but a boast of the supremacy of the American system—that is, the superiority of individualism and democracy over Soviet collectivism and totalitarianism (Palmer, 2003). This is made manifest in the figure of “Maverick” (Tom Cruise). He is his call sign’s namesake, a trait that is perceived as dangerous by his flight instructors—he is viewed as a “wild card” and “completely unpredictable.” Yet his unbridled individualism, from which his creative and courageous flying is derived, makes him an excellent pilot (Sprinker, 1987). He resists becoming the overly mechanical fighter that the Navy demands. Maverick’s later decision to temper his individualism with technical acumen—triggered by the tragic death of his best friend and co-pilot, “Goose” (Anthony Edwards)—unites the American Frontier with American technical proficiency. In the climactic aerial combat scene, Maverick saves the excessively mechanical pilot “Iceman” (Val Kilmer), and shoots down three MIGs. Maverick and the United States—that is, individualism and democracy complemented by technical proficiency (who could ignore the technological sophistication of the F-14 Tomcats and that of the pilots who flew them?)—are victorious over Soviet collectivism and totalitarianism, which bred machines rather than humans (Palmer, 2003).

In addition to reflecting and projecting cultural and political triumphalism, *Top Gun* reflected and projected militarism. It was a corollary that if the United States was superior to the Soviet Union, its military, then—protecting the American virtues

of individualism, democracy, and capitalism—was virtuous (not evil or fascist, as was suggested by New Left elements; such militarism was also a reaction against New Left pacifism and *anti*-anticommunism). Tony Shaw (2007) notes a link during the Cold War between the Pentagon and the film industry. The former provided technical and material aid in return for a positive portrayal of the military, which promoted militarism. *Top Gun* flight instructor “Viper” (Tom Skerritt) warns his student-pilots: “although we’re not at war, we must always act as though we are at war.” *Top Gun* was filmed with the Navy’s cooperation, romanticized combat, and was used as a recruitment tool (Sprinker, 1987). If the film is dismissed by the Left as a reflection of grotesque triumphalism and militarism, the Right takes a less critical stance as it indeed views the Cold War as a necessary confrontation with a murderous and totalitarian state with diametrically opposed values.

See also: Action-Adventure Film, The; War Film, The

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—Mark D. Popowski

TOUCH OF EVIL. Directed by Orson Welles, *Touch of Evil* was released in 1958. Starring Charlton Heston as Mexican law enforcement official Ramon Miguel “Mike” Vargas and Janet Leigh as his wife, Susan “Susie” Vargas, the film is perhaps best remembered for Welles’s performance as corrupt American police chief Hank Quinlan. Heavily made up, Welles transformed himself into a bloated, rumpled, sinister screen presence, creating what most agree was his finest characterization since he portrayed Charles Foster Kane in his classic 1941 film *Citizen Kane*.

Touch of Evil begins with one of the most famous opening sequences in film history. In one long—nearly four-minute—take, the camera pans, cranes, and tracks as it simultaneously follows a bomb that is armed and placed in a car alongside of which Mike and Susie casually stroll. Suddenly, the couple’s festive idyll is shattered when the car explodes. The sequence has long been celebrated for its technical bravura, but it has deeper implications: with his fluid camera, Welles, it seems, transgresses borders; or perhaps more correctly, he elides borders.

This theme of bordering proves to be the foundational narrative element in *Touch of Evil*. Protagonists Vargas and Quinlan, for instance, constantly cross borders, both geographical and cultural, as they struggle to establish their respective investigative jurisdictions. As it turns out, the case is complicated: a bomb that was placed in a car in Mexico, allegedly by a Mexican national, goes off in Texas, killing two Americans.

Who, then, should head the investigation? The situation is further complicated by the fact that Vargas is married to an American, while Quinlan has been involved with Tanya (Marlene Dietrich), a Mexican prostitute.

Pushing hard against each other, Vargas and Quinlan develop their own theories about the crime. Vargas attempts to solve the case by exploring the clues with which he has been presented, although he is immediately suspicious of the Grandis, a crime family whose members move back and forth between the United States and Mexico with impunity. For his part, Quinlan, based on what he takes to be his finely honed powers of deduction, decides that a young Mexican man, Manelo Sanchez (Victor Millan), is guilty. Excusing his actions by way of his own perverse ethic—Quinlan has adopted an ends-justify-the-means attitude, beating confessions out of his prisoners when they are not appropriately forthcoming—he fabricates a scenario that fits his preconceived notions about the crime and orders that the suspect be broken, by whatever means necessary.

As is the case in many of Welles's films, the ending of *Touch of Evil* is marked by irony. Quinlan's efforts to frame Sanchez (and eventually Vargas), ultimately leading to his own downfall, prove to have been unnecessary, as Sanchez finally confesses; or so it seems, as the question regarding whether the young man was really guilty or just cracked under interrogative pressure is left open—was the confession beaten out of him? We naturally conclude that Vargas's law-and-order sensibilities are more redeeming than Quinlan's obsessive, results-at-all-costs methods, and that this is the point of the film. But there is additional irony—after all, Vargas ends up illegally wiretapping Quinlan in order to expose him. Vargas, then, disturbed by his wife's victimization, resorts to using precisely the same unethical investigative methods that he claims to abhor, and that Quinlan began to use after his own wife was murdered.

The dark, complex exploration of transnational issues that provides the narrative framework for *Touch of Evil* is still resonant today, as Americans and Mexicans continue the bitter debates over immigration, the controversial fence being built between the two countries, and the frightening specter of Mexican drug gangs buying guns in Texas and bringing them back across the border. Filmically, Welles provided us with a playful yet unsettling trope of thematic boundaries: mixing low comedy with violent action, blurring the lines between hero and antagonist, and giving the camera a haunting life of its own. Not surprisingly, conservative studio heads at Universal "simplified" the film—a process that Welles was forced to endure on numerous occasions throughout his career. Even so, the influence of *Touch of Evil* can still be seen in the work of contemporary filmmakers such as Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu's *Babel* and the Coen brothers' *No Country for Old Men*.

See also: Film Noir; Hard-Boiled Detective Film, The; Welles, Orson

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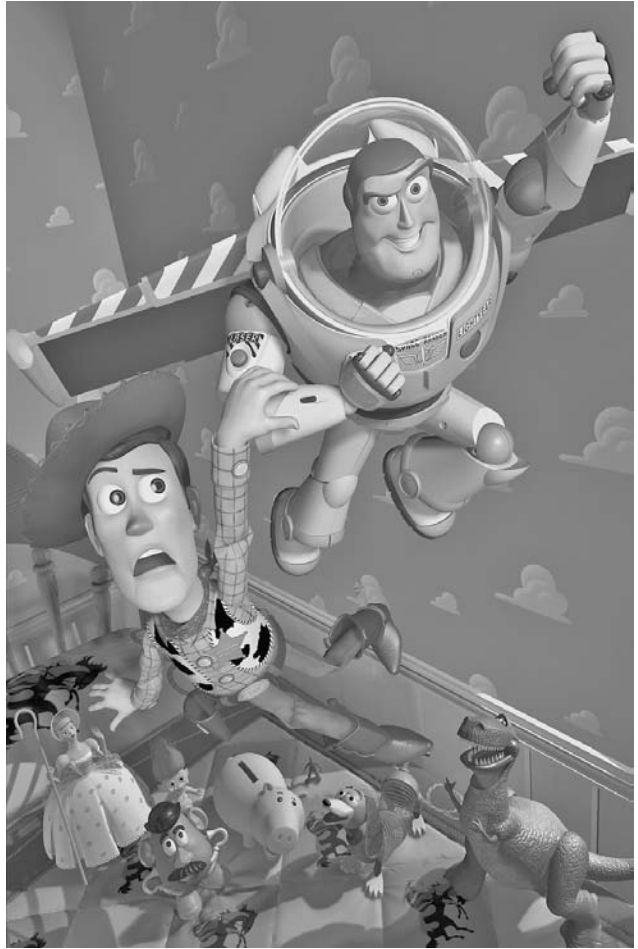
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—Dimitri Keramitas

TOY STORY. In July 1991, Disney Studios agreed to a three-feature-film deal with a small computer animation company owned by Steve Jobs, the founder of Apple Computers. Pixar, formally the computer division of George Lucas's Lucasfilms, had, until then, focused on developing computer animated short films and commercials. The deal allowed Pixar to develop its first feature-length film that was completely computer generated. The collaboration with Pixar marked a departure for Disney, long the dominant force in "cell animation," which had been richly praised for its realism. Pixar, realizing its inability to reach that level of animated realism, sought instead to provide a fantasy world that was a caricature of reality.

The company's first film, *Toy Story*, was written by John Lasseter, who also directed; Pete Docter; Andrew Stanton; and Joe Ranft. Inspired by an earlier Pixar short, *Tin Toy*, the film tells the story of a toy cowboy named Woody (voiced by Tom Hanks) who fears being replaced as a little boy's favorite plaything by a highly coveted toy astronaut named Buzz Lightyear (named after real-life astronaut Buzz Aldrin and voiced by Tim Allen). The film unfolds as a buddy picture, as the two toys learn to look past their differences and to work together to overcome adversity in order to make their owner, Andy, happy.

Production of *Toy Story* occupied a staff of 110 people, including 28 full-time animators, for four years. Using technology developed by Edwin Catmull, three-dimensional wire-frame models were initially scanned into a computer. From there, each model was equipped with articulated variables, "avars" for short, by which animators could show movement. Woody and Buzz contained more than 700 avars each; and to produce Woody's Tom Hanks-like facial expressions, 58 avars were placed on the model's face alone. Animators then added color, texture, transparency, and other



Scene from the 1995 film *Toy Story*. Shown are Sheriff Woody (voice: Tom Hanks) and Buzz Lightyear (voice: Tim Allen). Directed by John Lasseter. (Photofest)

specific characteristics to enhance the look of their creations. Interestingly, the decision to wrap the narrative of *Toy Story* around the toys themselves had much to do with the limitations of the technology in 1995; because toys are not expected to possess fluid, lifelike movements, reasoned the film's creators, audiences would be forgiving if animators were not able to achieve such realistic, humanlike effects. In the end, the final cinematic product required the use of 300 Sun microprocessors and 800,000 hours of computing time to complete.

Released on November 22, 1995, *Toy Story* became an instant blockbuster, earning \$64.7 million in its first 12 days. Indeed, it became the highest-grossing film of 1995, taking in \$192 million domestically and an additional \$357 million globally. Although Pixar had never been a particularly successful company before it joined Disney, shortly after the film's release Steve Jobs made the decision to take Pixar public. As he had in the past, Jobs proved to be a business genius, as Pixar became the most profitable IPO of the year; Jobs's share of the company was ultimately valued at over \$1.1 billion.

For his work on *Toy Story*, John Lasseter was awarded the Oscar for Special Achievement at the 1996 Academy Awards. The film was also nominated for awards for Best Original Music (Randy Newman), Best Original Song ("You've Got a Friend in Me" by Randy Newman), and Best Screenplay Written Directly for the Film.

The success of *Toy Story* cemented the relationship between Disney and Pixar, and Disney now set out to conquer computer-generated films. Michael Eisner, the visionary CEO of Disney, negotiated a new contract that extended Pixar's commitment to Disney for five more films and that made the two business entities equal partners in future ventures. Jobs, concerned about establishing Pixar's name in the film industry, insisted that all pictures produced by the new company carry both the Pixar and Disney labels. Disney, however, wisely retained control of all sequels and rights to consumer products. The trend that began with *Toy Story* continued over the years, producing one blockbuster after another, including *A Bug's Life* (1998), *Toy Story 2* (1999), *Monsters, Inc.* (2001), *Finding Nemo* (2003), *The Incredibles* (2004), *Cars* (2006), *Ratatouille* (2007), *Wall-E* (2008), and *Up* (2009).

See also: Animation

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—Robert W. Malick

TRAFFIC. Based loosely on *Traffik*, a 1990 British television drama about the opium trade between Pakistan and Great Britain, director Steven Soderbergh's multi-stranded film focuses ambitiously on cocaine trafficking at the U.S.-Mexican border and on consumption of the drug in the United States. Released at the end of a decade that saw increased anxiety in the U.S.-Mexican relationship—surrounding both illegal immigration and drugs—*Traffic* (2000) generally avoids the former topic and instead seeks to expose the futility of U.S. policymakers' "war on drugs." In the 1970s and 1980s, cartels in Bolivia, Colombia, and elsewhere expanded to meet escalating demand for illegal narcotics in the United States. President Ronald Reagan responded in 1982 by appointing the first "drug czar," which in 1988 became the cabinet-level Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy. Following a crackdown on Caribbean trade routes, in the late 1980s South American cartels began to rely increasingly on shipping cocaine through Mexico, enriching Mexican cartels and initiating a wave of corruption in government and law enforcement south of the border.

Unlike those who have perceived little but political grandstanding in the war on drugs, *Traffic* portrays policymakers and agency staffers as sincere combatants in a losing battle. This may explain why several government officials, including Sen. Harry Reid (D-Nev.) and Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), were willing to appear in cameos as themselves in the film. In one of *Traffic*'s three interwoven storylines, the real bureaucrats interact with the character of Ohio judge and newly appointed national drug czar Robert Wakefield (Michael Douglas), an earnest public servant who expresses shock when he learns that the cartels have a bigger budget than he does. In a second storyline, San Diego drug enforcement agents Monte (Don Cheadle) and Ray (Luis Guzmán) find it difficult to take their jobs seriously, especially when, during a stakeout at the plush La Jolla home of the Tijuana cartel's main U.S. connection, the drug dealer's wife (Catherine Zeta-Jones) knocks on the door of their undercover van and brings them lemonade.

In its third narrative thread, *Traffic* attributes much of the futility of drug enforcement to corruption in Mexico. Although the grainy, sepia-toned Mexican sequences have rankled some critics who say they present the country as stereotypically lawless and chaotic, others have praised the film for capturing living conditions in Tijuana without resorting to border-town clichés. For his portrayal of Tijuana police officer Javier Rodríguez, who struggles to advance without selling out to any of the competing drug cartels, Benicio Del Toro won the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor. Rodríguez offers to share information with U.S. drug agents, but only if they will provide funds to help Tijuana build a new Little League baseball field. Is Soderbergh arguing that Mexico needs traditional American values?

Whatever idyllic era of the American past the baseball field might symbolize is hard to imagine in *Traffic*, which is keen to explore the role of insatiable U.S. demand in fueling the drug trade. The film argues that the principal battleground in the drug war is located not at the border, but in the heart of the American family. *Traffic*'s cocaine addicts are not the crack-consuming, Reagan-era underclass, but Wakefield's 16-year-old daughter, Caroline, and her friends in Cincinnati's posh Indian Hill suburb. These high school students drink, snort cocaine, and trade sarcastic barbs while sprawled on leather couches in

family rooms lined with stained glass and shelves full of their highly educated parents' books. The behavior is learned: Wakefield's wife (Amy Irving) withholds information about Caroline's drug problem and accuses her husband of abusing alcohol; Robert tells her he drinks to cope with his "boredom" with the marriage. If the Wakefields serve as the individual problem family in *Traffic*, the basic cleavage in the American Family writ large is one of race and class, signified by the stark difference between tony Indian Hill and the seedy, less convincingly rendered urban neighborhood where the teenagers buy the drugs from an African American dealer. "If there is a war on drugs," Wakefield tells the White House press corps in a concluding scene, "then many of our family members are the enemy. I don't know how you wage war on your own family."

See also: Politics and Film

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—Kenneth F. Maffitt

12 ANGRY MEN. Set in a sweltering jury room on the hottest day of the year, Sidney Lumet's film *12 Angry Men* (1957) has a Zenlike simplicity. A young man is on trial for murder, accused of stabbing his father to death in their inner-city tenement. The judge instructs the jury that they must reach a unanimous verdict, and that a finding of guilty will result in the defendant's execution. Eleven of the 12 jurors see the case as open-and-shut, and the evidence as overwhelming. The twelfth is less certain. "Let's talk about it," he says, and for the remainder of the movie the 12 do just that. They muse, reason, speculate, snarl, badger, cajole, disparage, and threaten. Jackets are removed, ties loosened, and sleeves rolled up; unexamined assumptions are exposed, prejudices are laid bare, and deeply buried resentments dragged to the surface. When the talking is over, the vote has swung from 11-1 in favor of conviction to 12-0 in favor of acquittal.

In the film, as in the Reginald Rose television play from which it was adapted, the jurors represent 12 different varieties of American everyman, and the jury as a whole represents a cross-section of American society in the mid-1950s. Underscoring their everyman status is the fact that, in the film as in the play, they have no names, and are identified only by the numbers of the seats they occupy at the jury table. On paper the jurors are broadly drawn "types" defined by a trait or two: Number 2 is meek; Number 4 coldly rational; Number 10 bigoted; and so forth. Impeccable casting—Martin Balsam as Number 1, the consensus-seeking foreman; Jack Warden as boorish Number 7, who cares more about his baseball tickets than the trial; Jack Klugman as Number 5, who grew up on the same mean streets as the defendant—turns them into well-developed characters.



Actor Lee J. Cobb (right), as Juror # 3, wields a switchblade as he threatens Henry Fonda, as Juror # 8, in a scene from the 1957 film *12 Angry Men*, directed by Sidney Lumet. (Getty Images)

The nominal hero of the film is Number 8, who casts the lone dissenting vote and encourages the others to consider whether reasonable doubt exists in the case. Played by Henry Fonda—the lone star in a cast of character actors—he personifies 1950s liberal ideals. He is intelligent without being an intellectual, compassionate without being soft or naive, and persuasive without being slick or insincere. Number 8 is a passionate advocate for social justice, but he is no radical. Polite, soft-spoken, and conservatively dressed, he conforms to social norms rather than challenging them. He believes that the System works *if* everyone involved participates and does so in good faith. He is fierce toward those who neglect that duty (callous Number 3, indifferent Number 7, and bigoted Number 10) and solicitous toward those who feel they have no role to play (meek Number 2, elderly Number 9, and foreign-born Number 11). His deepest, most passionate commitment is not to a particular ideology, but to the integrity of the System. The issue for him is not whether the accused is guilty or innocent, but whether the rules—especially proof of guilt “beyond a reasonable doubt”—have been fairly applied to him.

Number 8’s idealistic view of the jury system is also that of Rose the playwright, Lumet the director, and the film itself. The triumph at the end of the film is not the fact that Number 8 wins the jury-room argument or that the accused walks free, but that the jury reaches the 12-0 verdict that the System (personified by the judge) requires. *12 Angry Men*, though structured as a legal thriller and directed as a

character-driven drama, is ultimately a political film: a ringing endorsement of the idea that the System can deliver the “justice for all” promised in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The political views expressed in *12 Angry Men* make it a popular supplement for civics classes, but they also make the film something of a period piece. Its faith in the System (expressed, in more complex ways, in Otto Preminger’s *Anatomy of a Murder* released two years later) is more in tune with the idealism of *Mister Smith Goes to Washington* (1938) and *The Devil and Daniel Webster* (1941) than it is with the cynicism of subsequent courtroom dramas. Those later films—from *Paths of Glory* (1958) and *Judgment at Nuremberg* (1961) through *And Justice for All* (1979), *The Verdict* (1983), *Scent of a Woman* (1997), and *The Runaway Jury* (2003)—portray the System as noble but irretrievably broken, controlled not by the People (for whom Lumet’s jurors stand in) but by a wealthy and powerful few.

See also: Lumet, Sidney; Melodrama, The

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—A. Bowdoin Van Riper

2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY. A landmark science fiction film, *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) showcases groundbreaking special effects and explores unusual philosophical and religious themes. Emphasizing scientific accuracy, the film presents a slow and sometimes disturbingly silent image of spaceflight. Based partly on “The Sentinel,” a short story by Arthur C. Clarke (co-screenwriter with director Stanley Kubrick), *2001* is a film of startling complexity and scope, especially in the challenging image of the Monolith (mysterious black rectangles of unknown origin). While *2001* resists singular explanations, two themes, evolution and technology, are central to the film’s structure.

The Monolith, the most famous image of *2001*, is closely associated with the process of evolution. While Clarke originally imagined the mysterious object as a robotic “intelligence detector” left on the Moon and designed to alert its builders when Earth evolved creatures capable of spaceflight (Clarke, 1999), the film’s Monolith is far more potent and abstract. *2001* begins four million years ago at “The Dawn of Man,” where a band of hominids encounter a Monolith and experience a sudden evolutionary breakthrough: tool use. The silent Monolith is juxtaposed against the Sun and Moon, both revealing its extraterrestrial origin and also suggesting humanity’s future trajectory. Cutting suddenly, *2001* leaps into the space age.

In the second act, the hominids’ descendants, technology-wielding humans, excavate a Monolith buried on the Moon. In the finale, astronaut Dave Bowman discovers

a giant Monolith orbiting Jupiter. Transported through a colorfully surreal passageway to an unknown destination, and accompanied by yet another Monolith, Bowman rapidly ages (or mutates) and is reborn as the Star Child, a “post-human” and presumably superhuman entity (Abrams, 2007). Though the Monoliths’ origin and the reason for their interest in humankind are not revealed, they *do* appear to be shaping humanity’s destiny. An ersatz-God of a secular teleology, the alien Monolith is the superpowerful (but not supernatural) midwife of human evolution. The process of evolution is also a form of birth. “The Dawn of Man,” Bowman’s journey through the stellar passageway, and the fetus-like Star Child all suggest birth and the creation of new life (Moore, 2001); two characters even mark birthdays. However, *Homo sapiens* is a stage in, not the culmination of, this gestation process.

This vision of evolution reflects the *Übermensch* (Superman or Overman) concept expounded by Friedrich Nietzsche in his philosophical novel *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Nietzsche, 1954). Nietzsche imagines humanity as a “rope” stretched between an animal past and a superhuman future (Nietzsche, 1954), a sequence, from “Beast” to “Man,” and then from “Man” to “Superman”—precisely the evolutionary process we see unfold in *2001*. The Nietzschean theme is further reinforced by the use of Richard Strauss’s Nietzsche-inspired music *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Signaling profound transitions, Strauss’s slow, rising music appears both at the point where tools are invented and at the point of Bowman’s final transformation.

The second key theme in *2001* is the relationship between humans and technology, which the film frames with an ironic tension (Fry, 2003). The film’s first act climaxes with toolmaking, specifically, the mental leap necessary to turn a bone into a club for hunting. Ominously, the first tool is also a weapon, which is ultimately deployed against a rival hominid band; the essence of humanity, the “killer-ape,” is technology and perhaps violence. The bone-weapon, exuberantly tossed in the air, is transformed



Actor Gary Lockwood as Dr. Frank Poole in the classic 1968 science fiction movie *2001: A Space Odyssey*, directed by Stanley Kubrick. (Archive Photos/Getty Images)

via the dramatic cut mentioned above into an orbiting spacecraft, linking primitive and advanced technology (Fry, 2003). Accompanied by Johann Strauss's *Blue Danube*, the scene revels in futuristic, albeit often sterile-looking, hardware. Encased in various technologies, astronauts are apparently scientific supermen who have transcended their biological limitations. The future (from the standpoint of 1968) is complete with commercial passenger spacecraft, a gracefully rotating space station, and a network of lunar bases. Nature itself is domesticated as air, gravity, and food are reworked to serve human needs. Even human metabolism is controllable, as three members of the Jupiter-bound *Discovery* travel in a state of suspended animation.

2001's image of technology remains ambiguous, for while *Discovery* is a life-sustaining cocoon for its crew, it is also the scene of a deadly confrontation between humanity and the product of its genius, the Hal-9000 computer. Hal, who proudly notes the error-free history of 9000-series computers, is eerily emotional in contrast to his stoic human crewmates. He is also capable of humanlike violence, and his rebellion (which is tempting to associate with that of Frankenstein's creature) is a reminder that artifice can threaten the artisan. Technological superman Bowman (the only surviving crewman) must confront the super *pseudo*-man of technology, Hal. Trapped outside *Discovery* by Hal, Bowman significantly reenters the ship without his space helmet (i.e., partially denuded of technology). Hal's rebellion and ultimate defeat by Bowman suggests that artificial intelligence is a false path to the Superman. The true destiny of *Homo sapiens*, biological evolution guided by the alien Monolith, finally unfolds in Bowman's metamorphosis into the Star Child. Technology, like the primitive hominids and *Homo sapiens* itself, is ultimately a means to a larger end.

Raising provocative questions and offering some of the most enduring images in cinema, *2001: A Space Odyssey* establishes biological and technological evolution as a teleological journey. In this narrative *Homo sapiens* is one stage in a larger process, the conclusion and meaning of which remains veiled.

See also: Kubrick, Stanley; Science Fiction Film, The

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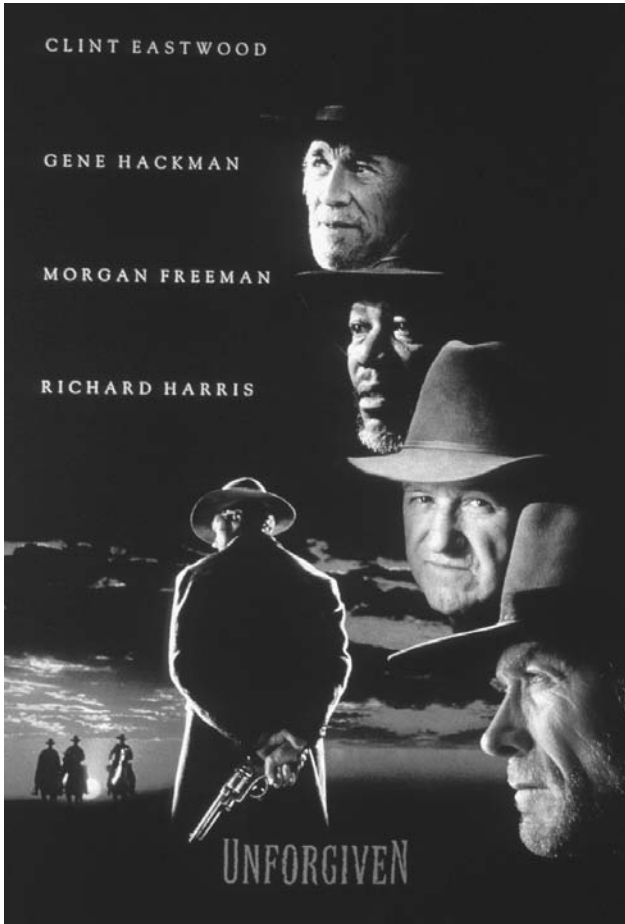
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—Karl Leib

UNFORGIVEN. *Unforgiven* (1992) was the 10th western with which the film's director, Clint Eastwood, had been associated. After starring in the "spaghetti westerns" *A Fistful of Dollars* (1964), *For a Few Dollars More* (1965), and *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* (1965), all with Italian director Sergio Leone, and then in other westerns such as *Hang 'Em High* (1968), *Two Mules for Sister Sara* (1970), and *Joe Kidd* (1972) with other directors, Eastwood starred in and stepped behind the camera to direct *High Plains Drifter* (1973), *The Outlaw Josey Wales* (1976), and *Pale Rider* (1985). In a sense, then, Eastwood had been moving toward making *Unforgiven* since early in his career.

According to critic Stephen Hunter, *Unforgiven* "tells the story of how the West was lost . . . lost . . . to pointless, ugly violence, men with guns who couldn't imagine the pain their bullets would cause and had no capacity to conceptualize the vacuum of loss they created when they killed" (Hunter, 1995). William Munny (Eastwood) is a former gunslinger and now a widower with two young children. Since being cured by his wife, as he says, "of drink and wickedness," he has nothing to show for his miserable existence but a squalid pig farm. But when he is approached by the "Schofield Kid" (Jaimz Woolvett) and offered an opportunity to split a \$1,000 reward for the capture of two men who have maimed a prostitute, he reluctantly straps on his gun for the first time in more than a decade. Along the way to the town of Big Whiskey, he joins up with his former partner-in-crime, Ned Logan (Morgan Freeman). Preceding them is another bounty hunter, railroad gunman "English Bob" (Richard Harris), who is traveling with his biographer (Saul Rubinek). Opposing them is Sheriff "Little Bill" Daggett (Gene Hackman), himself a brutal "former" badman. What transpires is a series of confrontations among the men that erupt in cold and calculated bloodletting.

Unforgiven is a film—like its director, one might say—of few words. More to the point, it's a collection of *sounds*—the wind rasping across the high plains, a sudden thunderbolt piercing lowering clouds, the reedy screech of a bow scraping across a violin, and the blunt cry of men dying from gunshots at point-blank range. Significantly, among its few words is the cryptic inscription that appears at the beginning of the film: "Dedicated to Sergio and Don." "They were my teachers," Eastwood explains. "In a



Poster for the 1992 film *Unforgiven*. Shown from top: Richard Harris, Morgan Freeman, Gene Hackman, and Clint Eastwood. Directed by Clint Eastwood. (Photofest)

way the film is a tribute to Sergio Leone and Don Siegel. If you analyze something like Sergio's *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*, you see there wasn't a whole lot of talk in them, just strong visuals and music and lots of shooting and crazy one-upmanship. They were more or less like operas. And Don was always so prepared and shot fast and brought his films in under schedule. You can learn a lot from that" (Tibbetts, 1993).

It is likely that *Unforgiven* may have been Eastwood's last western. "Whether it's my last western or not, remains to be seen," he said in an interview in 1992. "The western can be a genre that permits you to work in different approaches and moralities and subjects. You can take it in different directions. If you don't, it gets into a rut and there'll be somebody to pronounce 'the western is dead.' That happens every few years. Hollywood is so silly, sometimes, and it'll follow the fad—until somebody comes up with another successful one. I can say that if I was going to do just one last western, I think *Unforgiven* might be the one."

Unforgiven won four Oscars, for director, supporting actor (Gene Hackman), and editing (Joel Cox). In its blunt brutality, *Unforgiven* surpasses anything Eastwood had done before. Eastwood has been subject to attacks from the critics for allegedly indulging in gratuitously sensationalized violence. Especially devastating was the criticism leveled at him by the iconic film critic Pauline Kael in regard to his *Dirty Harry* movies. Regarding *Magnum Force*, for example, Kael wrote, "With a Clint Eastwood, the action film can—indeed, must—drop the pretense that human life has any value . . . killing is dissociated from pain; it's even dissociated from life." She dismissed another *Dirty Harry* entry, *The Enforcer*, as "garbage," depicting "a collection of villains so disgustingly cruel and inhuman that Eastwood can spend the rest of the movie killing them with a perfect conscience" (Kael, 1994). Eastwood is careful not to push the idea too far that *Unforgiven* is a "reply" to his critics; yet the film, for all its coruscating

and grimly choreographed scenes of slaughter and mayhem, can hardly be characterized as indulging in false heroics or sensationalizing violence. To the contrary.

People have always tried to see the West as something heroic and glamorous, and one could say that in my pictures I have followed the tradition of glamorizing violence. But in something like *Unforgiven* there's nothing very heroic at all. Now, I'm certainly not doing any penance for any of the mayhem I've presented on the screen over the years. But at the same token, I think it's a time in my life and a time in history where violence should not be such a humorous thing. That there are consequences to both the perpetrator as well as the victim. This is important to address, and if you can do it in a western atmosphere that would be fine. In a nutshell, it's not fun and it's not glamorous. I grew up with *White Heat* and *Public Enemy* and all those Jimmy Cagney films shooting people in the trunks of cars and all kinds of craziness. But it never made us into criminals and we didn't go out and start blowing people away because we saw it on the screen. You always realized it was just a movie. The movie industry has always been an easy target for attack because it always runs scared. (Tibbetts, 1993)

Eastwood's William Munny has tried to put his past as a gunfighter aside to become a farmer. Yet, after protesting constantly that he's "not that kind of killer" anymore, he finds in the moment of confrontation with "Little Bill" Daggett that he has not escaped his demons. "He's back in his mode of mayhem," Eastwood says.

And he doesn't care. He's his old self again, at least for the moment. Before, he's been very rusty, having trouble getting on his horse, he wasn't shooting very well. He wasn't nailing people with the very first shot (like I would do in my earlier films!). Now, when he goes on this suicidal mission, he's all machine. He's not going to do any of this 'you draw first' stuff. He marches in to the saloon and just says, 'Who owns this place?' And then, Boom! He not only coldly murders Daggett at point-blank range but shoots some bystanders with no more compunction than someone swatting a fly. Munny has been protesting all the time that he's changed, but maybe he's been protesting too much. (Tibbetts, 1993)

Unforgiven is suffused with a fatalistic resignation about life and death. "We all have it comin', kid," Munny warns a frightened young gunslinger. The gunslinging hijinks of Eastwood's spaghetti westerns, for all their carnage, had evaded this implacable truth. In *Unforgiven*, whatever Munny's justifications for killing—he is avenging the cruel torture/murder of his best friend—his deeds are executed with ruthless, cold-blooded precision. It is an image as beautiful in its graceful precision as it is deadly in its horrible finality. "You'll notice," affirms Eastwood, "that Munny is no longer the clumsy has-been you've seen throughout the film—falling from his horse, missing things at target practice, getting beaten up. For the first time, he's back now in full charge of his abilities" (Tibbetts, 1993).

By contrast to this apocalypse, the film's epilogue brings us back to where we began, to a view of a distant horizon line where Munny's farm is starkly outlined against the darkling twilight. On the soundtrack a plaintive tune is heard, picked out on a guitar.

Dwarfed by the sky, Munny's tiny figure is seen for a moment; then it disappears. "I tried to end with the same image that we had at the beginning," observes Eastwood. "The first time he was burying his wife. Now, he's—well; he's leaving. All we know is that he left the place with his two children. Maybe he went to San Francisco. Maybe not." Eastwood shrugs.

Maybe he's at last put his past behind him, or maybe he's just bought some time against the destruction that will surely catch up with him. When William Munny says, "I'm not the man I used to be," I'm sure there'll be folks out there who think that's me, Clint Eastwood, talking. Whatever they read in that line is fine with me. There may be some validity in that. When Munny says, "I ain't like that no more," it's true enough. Hopefully, all of us mature in some way and learn something from our lives. We hope that characters like Will Munny at last have changed for the good. But sometimes you wonder if all of us aren't really just going in circles, chasing our tails. Maybe, in the end, we haven't really learned anything. (Tibbetts, 1993)

See also: Eastwood, Clint; Western, The

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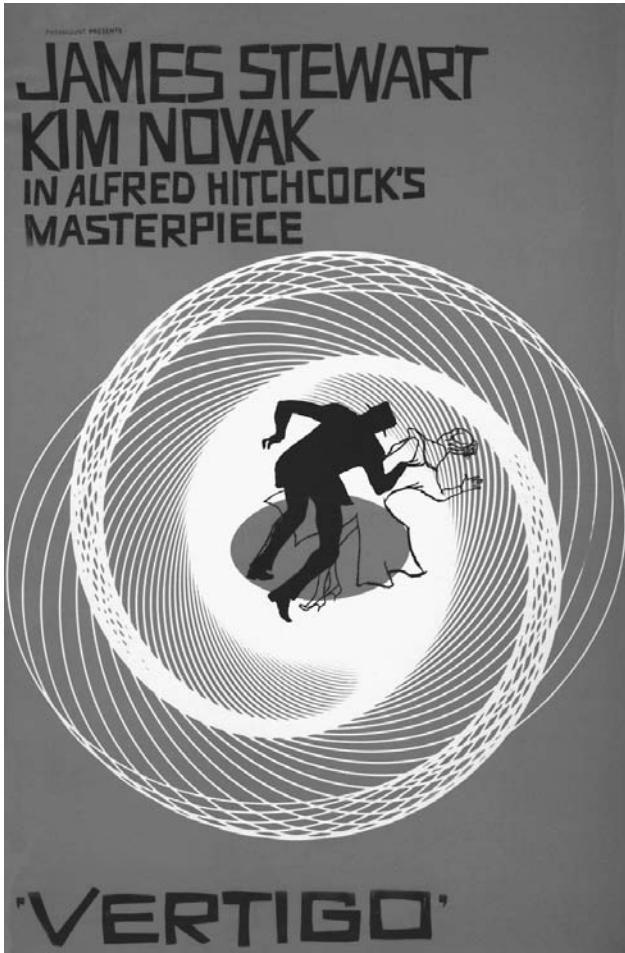
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—John C. Tibbetts

VERTIGO. Received upon its initial release in 1958 with muted admiration, Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* has come to be regarded as one of the cinema's most important and popular works. Its spiraling psychological intensity has left a mark on filmmakers as diverse as the experimental French New Wave director Chris Marker (*La jetée*) and the Dutch director Paul Verhoeven (*Basic Instinct*). But perhaps *Vertigo*'s most significant cultural impact has been on the generations of viewers who return to it repeatedly to connect with its obsessive and claustrophobic power. Seldom has a mainstream American movie created such an uncomfortably addictive emotional connection with its viewers.

Set in a hypnotically beautiful San Francisco, with many of its most famous sequences shot in almost surrealistically evocative locations, *Vertigo*, like other deluxe 1950s Paramount pictures, is a glossy and transfixing wide-screen VistaVision spectacle. But *Vertigo* employs the commercial cinematic apparatus of its day to produce the equivalent of an inner spectacle, a journey into the troubled, endless vortex of unattainable projection and desire. Oddly, for a film that depends so thoroughly on an American locale (San Francisco with its labyrinthine hills and vast expanses of water-spanning steel seems the only place where this drama of the unconscious could unfold), and whose main character fits a classic American movie profile (he's a psychologically wounded former police detective), *Vertigo* transcends any particular American influence and jumps headlong into a world that evokes the power of archetypal dreams.

Each of the film's major acts intensifies its ineluctable spiral into personal tragedy. Act one is prelude: Scottie Ferguson (James Stewart) is a victim of acrophobia; his fear of heights leads to the accidental death of a fellow police officer. Act two is a mystery story: After forced retirement, Scottie is privately employed by an old friend to follow, surreptitiously, his blonde, socialite wife Madeleine (Kim Novak), who has grown morbidly obsessed with a dead woman's past, even taking on the dead woman's personality and suicidal impulses. Before this act is over, Scottie follows Madeleine to museums and flower shops, rescues her from a suicidal plunge into San Francisco Bay, takes her home (and undresses her), and falls in love. In trying to break Madeleine's obsession, Scottie brings her to an old mission that haunts her dreams; but Madeleine,



Poster advertising *Vertigo*, Alfred Hitchcock's classic 1961 film starring Jimmy Stewart and Kim Novak. (Library of Congress)

overcome with her need to reenact the dead woman's suicide, bolts from his arms and hurls herself off the mission's tower. Scottie's acrophobia, of course, prevents him from stopping her as she falls to her death.

Act three makes it clear that the film's real theme is about the impossibility of Scottie reclaiming his lost anima figure; now the plot follows a traumatized Scottie, who imagines he sees the dead Madeleine in passing women. Lonely and grieving, walking in a disembodied state, Scottie one day passes Judy Barton, a cheap-looking, brunette, working-class girl whose face nonetheless is a dead ringer for his lost love. Scottie sets out to mold Judy into what he desires: he gets her to dye her hair blonde and to cut it like Madeleine's; he buys her the same color and style of clothing. Indeed, only when the fetishistic transformation has been achieved can he complete an intoxicating, vertiginous consummation of their relationship. In this iconic filmic moment—the camera envelops the characters in a stunning 360-degree pan—Hitchcock lays

bare an obsessive preoccupation with a type, one embodied by actresses such as Madeleine Carroll, Grace Kelly, and later by Eva Marie Saint, Janet Leigh, and Tippi Hedren.

In love with a dead woman whom he has in effect reincarnated through Judy, Scottie discovers the inevitable twist of act four—after it has already been revealed to the audience: Judy *was* Madeleine, or, rather, she played her in order to involve Scottie in the murder of the real Madeleine, whom Scottie never actually met. In the end, Judy falls for Scottie as she works to seduce him into murdering Madeleine; but for whom does Scottie fall? The Madeleine who never was—the archetypal Madeleine? A phantom of projected passion? Enraged when the plot is revealed, Scottie drags Judy back to the scene of the crime, and Hitchcock's tragedy ends in a final desperate apotheosis of the repetition compulsion at the center of lost love: like Scottie, we are left peering

into the mystery of eternal unquenchable desire, into a love we always wanted but that never was—and that can never be.

See also: Hitchcock, Alfred

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—Robert Cowgill

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WAITING FOR GUFFMAN. Christopher Guest has become so identified with the satiric “mockumentary” that a retrospective of his work was held at the Museum of Modern Art in 2005. After appearing in, and co-writing, Rob Reiner’s groundbreaking *This Is Spinal Tap* (1986), Guest launched out on his own with *Waiting for Guffman* (1996). Like his subsequent efforts, notably *Best in Show* (2000) and *A Mighty Wind* (2003), *Guffman* utilizes the forms and practices of documentary in order to undermine any claims to truth.

Anyone who has ever participated in a local theater project or a hometown festival will find something gruesomely familiar in *Waiting for Guffman*. Behind its perversely entertaining send-up of homespun theatrics, its gingham-cloth humor, and its cotton-candy satire is a wicked set of jaws with big teeth.

The town of Blaine, Missouri, is celebrating its “sesquicentennial” (that’s a century and a half, whispers the town mayor), and it wants to put on a show called “Red, White, and Blaine.” The local theater director, Corky St. Clair (Guest), takes on the assignment, rounds up the usual suspects, suffers through the rehearsals, and prepares for opening night. Tension is added by the news that a big-time Broadway scout will attend. His name is “Mort Guffman.”

The movie’s first 10 minutes sets the stage, as it were, reviewing the history of the town of Blaine: In frontier days a pioneer named Blaine Fabin, bound to a wagon train traveling from Philadelphia to California, stopped at the first scent of salt water. Proclaiming the region to be part of California, he established a town in his own name. No matter the region turned out to be in Missouri, Blaine’s noble history had begun. Years later came a visit from President McKinley, whose delight at being presented with a locally manufactured footstool assured the town of becoming “The Stool Capitol of the World.” Then in 1946, a UFO landed and abducted one of the local townspeople, leaving him, decades later, remembering the numberless hours he spent enduring the “probing” of aliens.

Corky takes up the challenge of mounting a musical pageant celebrating this glorious heritage. He brings to the task impressive theatrical credentials, like his local production of a stage version of *Backdraft* (“You can *feel* the heat!”), which almost

burned down the theater house. Now, with *Red, White, and Blaine* set to go, Corky awaits Mr. Guffman with more than the usual anticipation. Maybe, just maybe, the show can go to Broadway, and Corky will have a chance to return to the Great White Way.

Waiting for Guffman's cast members have their characters securely within their sights—and they take dead aim. Guest's Corky pouts and lisps his way through a gay stereotype that would be outrageous if it were not also occasionally starkly poignant. With his "Judy Tenuta" T-shirts and vest-bolero pants ensembles, he's an exotic fish in a humdrum aquarium. Eugene Levy is Allan Pearl, the dentist, who claims theater legacy from his grandfather's Yiddish theater days; Catherine O'Hara and Fred Willard are Sara and Ron Albertson, theater wannabes and local travel agents who have never ventured beyond Blaine (except for Ron, who once had penis-reduction surgery in Jefferson City); Parker Posey is Libby the Dairy Queen girl, who's willing to quit ice cream confections like Blizzards and Derbys for the footlights; Bob Balaban is Lloyd, the music teacher, terminally timid but a dynamo at the podium; and Lewis Arquette is Clifford, the grizzled town father who is lured out of his trailer and out of retirement.

On opening night the chair reserved for Guffman remains empty until the production is 10 minutes gone. Then a dapper man arrives and sits down. At the postplay backstage festivities, however, after he is introduced to the ecstatic cast, he admits his name is not Guffman but "Roy Loomis," in town on a brief visit. In the manner of Samuel Beckett, it seems, the entire town will have to go on waiting for Guffman.

Red, White, and Blaine both illuminates and alters the lives of Blaine's residents. The dentist and the travel planners leave their jobs and head for the showbiz spotlights, the former to entertain at a Miami nursing home, the latter two to work as extras in Hollywood. The Dairy Queen girl leaves town, as well, but only because her father is now out of prison ("on good behavior," since he didn't kill anybody), and they are on the road together while she dreams of new ways to make fat-free Blizzards. And Corky, well, he returns to New York where he opens up a theater memorabilia shop, featuring such red hot items as "Remains of the Day" lunch boxes and "My Dinner with Andre" action figures.

The film is shot in pseudo *cinéma vérité* style, with Guest's camera wobbling around the characters, who speak directly into it, shamelessly proclaiming who and what they are. Because the cast and credits are reserved for the end of the film, you almost feel as if you are viewing a real documentary about small-town life. And as for the big musical production itself, never fear—you see it in its entirety, footstools and flying saucers and everything. But hints of pathos, even tragedy, peek through the warp and woof of events. Revelations of Corky's dismal private life (references to a nonexistent "wife" apparently have provided him with the necessary cover to live in Blaine) and theatrical background (he was, he says, "stomped down for years" playing in off-off-off-off Broadway theater productions in New York City) are dispensed intermittently throughout the film. Most moving of all, perhaps, is the town councilman's glittering eyes as he gazes with rapt—and barely concealed sexual—attention at Corky as he performs. In his hungry stare is the real drama, the play-behind-the-play; the hollow dark that lurks behind the brightly painted flats. That is the real meaning of Blaine

and the real message behind this film: You can *dream* of California, but you've got to *live* in Blaine.

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—John C. Tibbetts

WAY WE WERE, THE. In *The Way We Were* (1973), director Sydney Pollack wraps an exquisite love story within an overarching narrative framework oriented around political and cultural issues that emerged during the middle decades of the twentieth century. Set against the backdrop of the lead-up to WWII and the war's aftermath, Pollack's love story focuses on the lives of the tragically mismatched Hubbell Gardner (Robert Redford) and Katie Morosky (Barbra Streisand). One of seven films that Robert Redford and Pollack made together, *The Way We Were* proved to be a critical and box-office success.

We first encounter the indomitable Katie as she scurries across the busy streets of New York City to one of her many jobs, this one as an assistant to radio producer Bill Verso (Herb Edelman). When Bill's date unexpectedly cancels on him, Katie has the good fortune of being taken by her boss to the famous El Morocco nightclub. Filled with servicemen and their dates, the nightclub is a glittering respite from the horrors of war. Mesmerized by the setting, Katie's eyes scan the room until they light upon Hubbell; resplendent in uniform, Hubbell sits with eyes closed, subtly swaying on a bar stool. Smiling, Katie's mind drifts back to when she and Hubbell were students at a prestigious Eastern college.

The two could not have been more different. Hubbell was the all-American golden boy attending school on an athletic scholarship. A star on both the track and rowing teams, seemingly without a care in the world, he is involved with Carol Ann (Lois Chiles), a lovely young woman who comes from money. Katie, on the other hand, must work a host of jobs to support herself. An extraordinarily serious student, she is also a campus radical. Their ill-fated attraction to each other begins to be revealed during an on-campus Peace Rally. The president of the Young Communist League, Katie gives a speech in support of the Soviet Union's resistance to Franco's rise to power in Spain. Decrying Hitler's and Mussolini's use of Spain as a "testing ground for another World War," Katie calls upon her classmates to pledge themselves to "world peace now." In the audience, Hubbell listens with rapt attention.

Significantly, the Young Communist League was a real-life student organization that emerged during the 1930s as a core part of the American Youth Congress. Supported by Eleanor Roosevelt, members of the YCL were some of the most vocal antiwar advocates during the 1930s. In Pollack's film, Katie embodies the YCL movement, and,



Robert Redford and Barbra Streisand embrace in a publicity photo from the film *The Way We Were*, directed by Sydney Pollack, 1973. (Fotos International/Getty Images)

consumed by her political passions, she cannot understand her attraction to the seemingly feckless Hubbell. She begins to change her mind about him, however, when she listens to their professor read aloud one of Hubbell's short stories—"The All American Smile"—in a literature class Katie and Hubbell share: "In a way he was like the country he lived in," the story begins, "everything came too easily to him." Devastated that her story was not chosen to be read, Katie still cannot help but listen—like Hubbell to her speech—with rapt attention. And so their bond is forged.

After bringing us back to El Morocco, Pollack allows us to watch as Katie and Hubbell fall in love. Now a staunch supporter of President Roosevelt and his WWII foreign policies, Katie is surprised that Hubbell, whom she comes to realize is much more than just a pretty face, is not as interested in politics as she: "You'd rather talk politics," says Hubbell, "all the contradictions. . . . It's all a bunch of political double talk, but you hold on. I don't see how you do it." "I don't see how

you can't," retorts Katie. As it turns out, not only does Katie stump for Roosevelt, but a number of her jobs—including the one at the radio station—are connected to the Office of War Information, a federal agency that Roosevelt brought into existence when he signed Executive Order 9182 on June 13, 1942. The Office of War Information was established, the order declared, "In recognition of the right of the American people and of all other peoples opposing the Axis aggressors to be truthfully informed about the common war effort." Much like George Creel's World War I-era Committee on Public Information, which had taken advantage of the fledgling film industry by using it to communicate the prowar messages of Woodrow Wilson, the OWI enlisted the aid of radio producers and Hollywood film directors to help give expression to Roosevelt's own prowar messages.

Although her passion intrigues Hubbell, Katie's all-consuming commitment to the world of politics almost drives him away. Having salvaged the relationship, though, the couple marries and relocates to Los Angeles after Hubbell sells his novel to Hollywood. Well-off, with a beachfront house, a boat, and a sports car, the two seem to have reconciled their differences—until Katie gets involved in the cause of the so-called Hollywood Ten. The Hollywood Ten was the name given to a group of real-life writers and directors who were cited for contempt of Congress when they refused to cooperate with the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), which was investigating alleged communist influence in Hollywood. The first official Hollywood blacklist was instituted on November 25, 1947, the day after the 10 men of the group were cited for contempt. In a press release issued a week later by Eric Johnston, then head of the Motion Picture Association of America, 48 of the most powerful studio heads in the industry stated that they “deplore[d] the actions of the 10 Hollywood men who have been cited for contempt by the House of Representatives.” Although they claimed that they did not “desire to prejudge their legal rights,” they nevertheless declared that they had no choice but to “forthwith discharge or suspend without compensation” each member of the “10 until such time as he is acquitted or has purged himself of contempt and declares under oath that he is not a Communist.” All of the members of the group were ultimately fined and jailed for their refusal to bow to the dictates of Congress and industry heads.

Katie is depicted as a fellow traveler of the Hollywood Ten, literally attending their hearings in Washington, D.C. After she and Hubbell are accosted by a group of frenzied anticommunist protestors, the couple exchanges angry words: “You didn’t expect to come to Hollywood and get a chance to tell off the world, did you?” says Hubbell. “Is that what you think I’m doing?” responds Katie. “You bet I do,” says Hubbell bitterly. Once again, Katie’s politics prove too much for Hubbell, and the couple begins to break apart, this time for good. In the film’s wonderfully romantic final sequence, Katie and Hubbell encounter each other on a busy New York City thoroughfare. Katie is there to gather signatures and pass out flyers protesting the use of the H-Bomb, the horrible nuclear weapon developed by both the United States and the Soviet Union during the early 1950s; Hubbell, accompanied by his new girl, is there writing a television show. “You never give up,” says Hubbell about her continuing protest activities. “Only when I’m absolutely forced to,” responds Katie, “but I’m a very good loser.” “Better than I am,” Hubbell admits. “Well, I’ve had . . . more practice,” replies Katie softly.

See also: Pollack, Sydney; Streisand, Barbra

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—Philip C. DiMare

WEST SIDE STORY. Like many movie musicals, *West Side Story* (1961) was first a Broadway hit. The play by Arthur Laurents, adapted by Ernest Lehman, is an updating of *Romeo and Juliet*, cleverly set in New York City's Upper West Side with youth gangs in place of the feuding families that complicate young love. Directed by Jerome Robbins and Robert Wise, the United Artists release features choreography by Robbins and music and lyrics by Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim, respectively. Leading actors, none of whom transferred from Broadway, are Natalie Wood (Maria), Richard Beymer (Tony), George Chakiris (Bernardo), Rita Moreno (Anita), and Russ Tamblyn (Riff); both Wood's and Beymer's songs were dubbed by lesser-known artists.

The story revolves around the doomed love affair of Tony and Maria. Tony is a former member of the Jets, an Anglo gang led by Riff, and anxious to protect their territory from the newly arrived Puerto Rican gang, the Sharks. Maria is engaged to Chino, her brother Bernardo is the Sharks' leader, and Anita is her friend and Bernardo's girlfriend. The film opens with a potential rumble between the gangs being avoided only when the police arrive. Tensions erupt again at a dance attended by the gangs and "their girls," while Tony and Maria fall in love. Meanwhile, a war council is in the works to settle who will dominate the streets. The fight that ends Act I also ends in tragedy: Bernardo has killed Riff and Tony has killed Bernardo. In Act II Tony and Maria still vow to be together despite the quest for revenge on both sides. Anita is assaulted by some Jets and responds by claiming Chino has killed Maria. When Tony hears this he seeks out Chino, telling Chino to kill him, too; at the last minute Tony sees Maria alive but Chino does shoot him as the lovers run toward one another. In a departure from Shakespeare, Maria survives and the film ends on a note of hope as members of the two gangs carry Tony's body away.

Its semi-tragic ending is one of several ways *West Side Story* holds a unique place in movie musical history, continuing many aspects of the postwar genre but in ways geared to then-contemporary themes, music, and politics. The love story, for example, is the staple of the postwar musical, but the film does not deliver the happily-ever-after ending audiences had come to expect. Similarly traditional are memorable tunes that can exist independently of the show, and *West Side Story* delivers many, including "America," "Maria," "Something's Coming," "Somewhere," and "Tonight." The fact that they are Bernstein-Sondheim songs, though, means they depart from the melodic conventions of the earlier musicals while aptly conveying the bittersweet flavor of the show. Finally, dance, a crucial element of plot development since *Oklahoma!*, is used to great effect in scenes both typical (Tony and Maria at the dance) and unusual (dancing gang members).

Undoubtedly the mixture of the familiar and the contemporary contributed to the film's appeal to a wide range of viewers, both in 1961 and after. The specter of the "juvenile delinquent," a perennial American concern, was revived in the fifties, and not just by educators and sociologists, but in films such as *The Wild One* (1953), *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), and *Blackboard Jungle* (1955). *West Side Story* linked these concerns to issues of immigration and urban ethnic tension, especially in relation to the post-WWII "Great Migration" of Puerto Ricans to New York City. This made *West Side Story* not only timely but also exceptional, in that it allowed the voices of immigrant others to be heard during a time when they were most often silenced. This expressive shift of perspective is

seen—and heard—in the film’s reimagined version of the production number “America.” In the on-screen version, the Sharks’ Puerto Rican gang members are included in the number, and answer the overly sentimental pronouncement that “Life is all right in America” with the poignantly cynical refrain, “If you’re all white in America.”

West Side Story has often been described as the most honored movie musical ever made, and rightly so. It received 11 Academy Award nominations and won ten, including Best Picture, Best Director (for both Robbins and Wise), Best Supporting Actor and Actress, and Best Scoring of a Musical Picture. Only three films have won more Oscars, and only nine other musicals have been named Best Picture. *West Side Story* is on the American Film Institute’s Top 100 list, contains three of its Top 100 Songs, and is rated number two on its list of the 25 Greatest Movie Musicals of All Time.

See also: Ethnic and Immigrant Culture Cinema; Musical, The; Music in the Movies

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—Vicki L. Eaklor

WHEN HARRY MET SALLY. Produced and directed by Rob Reiner, and starring Billy Crystal and Meg Ryan, *When Harry Met Sally* is a romantic comedy that exposes the challenges of finding love and staying married. Released in the summer of 1989, the film’s edgy and sophisticated screenplay earned writer Nora Ephron an Oscar nomination.

The film opens with Harry Connick’s rendition of “It Had to Be You” playing in the background, preparing the viewer for the possibility of romance. Harry (Crystal) and Sally (Ryan) are introduced as they drive all night from Chicago to New York City. During the 18 hours they spend together, they discuss love, sexual relationships, and the differences between men and women. Harry thinks that “Men and women can’t be friends because the sex part always gets in the way.” When they reach New York City the next morning, they part ways, although we realize that a spark between the two has been lit. They meet again five years later, but both are in committed relationships. After another five years, they meet once more; now, though, their respective relationships ended, they become friends. Harry, surprised at himself, muses, “Great . . . a woman friend.”

The extremely intimate yet nonsexual relationship that develops between Harry and Sally is cleverly depicted by Reiner, who shows the pair, through the use of split screen, snuggled in their own beds talking to each other on the phone while they watch the same movie; taking long meandering walks; shopping together; and sharing meals. When their relationship finally does turn sexual, it is Harry who cannot decide how



Scene from the 1989 film *When Harry Met Sally*, starring Meg Ryan and Billy Crystal. Directed by Rob Reiner. (Photofest)

this shift will affect their friendship; in the end, as Harry predicted long before during their fateful car ride to New York City, the friendship cannot survive “the sex part.”

Of course, as is the case with all romantic comedy couples, *we* know Harry and Sally are right for each other even if they don’t. It takes Harry and Sally another two years to admit to themselves that they are, indeed, perfectly suited, and they quickly marry. As Harry says, “when you realize that you want to spend the rest of your life with somebody, you want the rest of your life to start as soon as possible.”

Reiner uses documentary-style interviews with older couples to mark out the filmic points of transitions in the relationship between Harry and Sally. Interestingly, the experiences of love and intimacy discussed by these older couples are all initiated with “love at first sight” moments that lead to lasting marriages. These couples serve to emphasize the idealistic notion that there actually is one “right person” out there for all of us who is just waiting to be found. Even though they don’t recognize their own “love at first sight” moment, it was there, and, just like those couples in the interviews, ultimately they do come to love each other deeply. Pictured in their own interview at the end of the film, it appears that their relationship will endure.

According to Reiner, the movie was based on his own tortured experiences. He had discussed the project with Nora Ephron, seeking out a woman who would understand and be able to write about the experiences of other women. Their conversations ranged over topics such as friendship and sex, and they eventually led Reiner to pose the question to Ephron: “Can men and women be friends without having sex?” Based on

Ephron's screenplay, we are never sure about the answer to that question—after all, the “sex part” did get in the way of the friendship between Harry and Sally, at least until they admitted they were in love. Indeed, in one of the most iconic scenes in American film, an older woman (played by Reiner's mother), who is sitting in a restaurant in which Harry and Sally are eating, watches with rapt attention as Sally demonstrates, for all to see and hear, how perfectly a woman can fake an orgasm. When the waiter approaches the women to take her order, she says simply, “I'll have what she's having.”

See also: Ephron, Nora; Romantic Comedy, The

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—Vicky Bach

WHITE CHRISTMAS. Following the success of *Holiday Inn* in 1942, and the identification of the Academy Award-winning Irving Berlin song “White Christmas” with the Christmas season, Paramount decided to use *Holiday Inn* as the inspiration for a new film and call it *White Christmas* (1954). As with *Holiday Inn*, *White Christmas* featured a soundtrack composed by Irving Berlin; the picture was also intended to be the third screen collaboration of *Holiday Inn* co-stars Bing Crosby and Fred Astaire. After reading the script, however, Astaire decided to pass on the film, and the role was given to Donald O'Connor. Unluckily, O'Connor injured his leg during filming, and the part ultimately went to Danny Kaye.

White Christmas tells the story of a song-and-dance duo, Bob Wallace (Crosby) and Phil Davis (Kaye), who, after meeting in the army, become fast friends and develop a show-business partnership. After returning to the States, the two performers decide to take some much-needed time off. They head to a New England ski resort with two showgirl sisters, Betty (Rosemary Clooney) and Judy Haynes (Vera-Ellen). On arriving at the resort, they discover that the owner, Thomas Waverly (Dean Jagger), is their former army general. Unfortunately, the resort is almost bankrupt, as no snow has fallen that year. In order to help General Waverly, the group decides to stage a benefit gala for him. The benefit is a success, snow starts to fall, the resort is saved, and Bob and Phil find love in the arms of Betty and Judy.

White Christmas is an example of the feel-good, family entertainment common during the 1950s. Its happy, some would say overly sentimental, ending suggests that while the troubles of wartime are hard to overcome, brotherhood, love, and, of course, Christmas, have transformative, even redemptive powers, an idea that was particularly appealing to viewers living in Cold War America. These notions, it seems, are embodied in the film's eponymous title song. Indeed, “White Christmas” is a song imbued with the wartime mood. Sad and wistful, it captures emotions shared by both returning

soldiers and civilians at home. The song, like the film, recalls the emotions of wartime; and when it sounds out at the end of the film, it acts as a trigger for nostalgic yearnings for the peace and happiness traditionally associated with Christmas. The song could not be nominated for an Academy Award for its use in *White Christmas*, however, as it had already won that award when it was used in *Holiday Inn*. Instead “Count Your Blessings Instead of Sheep” was nominated for Best Original Song, losing to “Three Coins in the Fountain” from the film of the same name. Nevertheless by the 1980s, “White Christmas” had become the best-selling song of all time.

See also: Musical, The; Music in Film

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—Victoria Williams

WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF? *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* was released in 1966 by Warner Bros. The debut film of director Mike Nichols, it was both a critical and commercial hit, grossing more than \$14.5 million. The film stars Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton, who were, at the time, the most famous couple in the world. Adapted by Ernest Lehman from the play by Edward Albee, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* follows a night in the life of married couple George (Burton), a history professor, and Martha (Taylor), the daughter of the president of the university. Filmed in black and white, and composed largely of long takes and facial close-ups, the visual austerity of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* is balanced by the density of its dialogue. Nichols's desire to maintain both Albee's rhythm and commentary on language use made *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* the first picture intentionally shot with overlapping dialogue.

George and Martha have an apparently embittered marriage, but it is on this night that things “snap” and they declare “total war” on each other. Despite the couple's constant bickering, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* is a dark romantic comedy. Although their ferocious wordplay suggests nefarious intentions, it is also proof that they are a good match. The story occurs mostly in George and Martha's home in the fictional town of New Carthage, where they host a recently hired biology professor and his wife, Nick (George Segal) and Honey (Sandy Dennis). The young couple becomes instrumental to George and Martha's infighting. The narrative develops through a series of verbal “games” orchestrated by George and Martha to hurt each other and their guests. Martha repeatedly attacks George's lack of ambition, belaboring Nick's status as a biology professor to incite internecine rivalries; she makes sexual advances toward the ambitious Nick, who does not resist since he wants to “plow a few pertinent wives” in order to ascend the university ladder. Over the course of the night, and



Scene from the 1966 film *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, starring Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor. Directed by Mike Nichols. (Apic/Getty Images)

as the couples become increasingly drunk, secrets appear to be uncovered. However, the film maintains a veil of ambiguity, and never allows the spectator to be certain about the facts of George's and Martha's pasts. We always suspect their stories might be based in some truth but, at the same time, are partially invented to inspire particular reactions in each other (and their guests). The evening culminates in the revelation that the son George and Martha claimed to have is a product of their imaginations.

The film's frank sexual themes reflected the trend toward mature content evidenced by the growing popularity of non-Hollywood films gaining favor in America in the 1960s, but it was its graphic language—including words never before heard on American screens—that made *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* a milestone cinematic work. It became the first movie to challenge successfully the Motion Picture Production Code established by Will Hays in 1934. Initially, the Code refused to approve the film, but after a series of threats to release the film regardless of the Code's approval, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* was finally granted a Code seal as an exemption from its standard strictures based on the belief that it was a "superior picture." Similarly, the influential Catholic Legion of Decency approved the film for adults, as it fit into their "think film" category. Thus, having essentially defeated the Production Code (which would be dismantled only two years later and replaced by the Motion Picture Association of America

ratings system), it changed the course of Hollywood cinema, arguably marking the beginning of the period often termed “New Hollywood.”

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? was nominated for 13 Academy Awards, and is notable for being one of the few films whose entire cast was nominated for the Oscar. It won five, including Best Actress (Taylor); Best Supporting Actress (Dennis); Best Art Direction, Black and White (Richard Sylbert and George James Hopkins); Best Cinematography, Black-and-White (Haskell Wexler); and Best Costume Design, Black-and-White (Irene Sharaff). Among other accolades, the film won three British Academy of Film and Television Arts Awards, including Best Picture. In 2007, it ranked 67th on the American Film Institute's list of the 100 Greatest Films.

See also: Melodrama, The; Nichols, Mike; Taylor, Elizabeth

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—Kyle Stevens

WILD BUNCH, THE. The opening sequence of Sam Peckinpah's *The Wild Bunch* (1969) introduces the film's themes and motifs. A group of men wearing U. S. Army uniforms rides slowly into a small town in South Texas. The members of the group look uneasily at a number of children tormenting scorpions in a pile of red ants, an action foreshadowing the fates of the men. Everything seems normal as they arrive in the town. This tranquility is shattered, however, when the men enter the local bank and pull out their guns as Pike Bishop (William Holden), their leader, shouts, “If they move . . . kill 'em.” The robbers soon discover they have walked into a trap. Bounty hunters led by Deke Thornton (Robert Ryan) are waiting on top of a building across the street. Bishop's men wait until the South Texas Temperance Union marches by to open fire, and bodies, most belonging to innocent citizens, begin dropping. Bishop and four of his men escape, leaving the rest behind to crazed scavengers (Strother Martin and L. Q. Jones).

This shockingly violent—for 1969—opening sequence helps to establish the members of Bishop's gang as men who are being left behind in the rapidly changing industrial world of the early twentieth century. Even they realize, it seems, that as the new century dawns, times are changing in America. This theme of displaced men struggling against the reality of a fading frontier began to be played out a decade earlier in John Sturges's *The Magnificent Seven*—one can even see resonances of the idea in John Ford's *The Searchers* (1956)—and Arthur Penn addressed the same subject in *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, also released in 1969. In these films, especially in *The Wild Bunch* and *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, there would be no romanticization of the American West.



Scene from the 1969 film *The Wild Bunch*, starring (from left) Ben Johnson (as Tector Gorch), Warren Oates (as Lyle Gorch), William Holden (as Pike Bishop), and Ernest Borgnine (as Dutch Engstrom). Directed by Sam Peckinpah. (Photofest)

With no place left for them within American boundaries, the members of Bishop's gang make their way across the border into Mexico. Pursued by Thornton, they find themselves in the midst of the Mexican Revolution, a decade-long revolt spanning the period from 1910 to 1920. They go to the village of Angel (Jaime Sanchez), which has been attacked by the rampaging federal army of General Mapache (Emilio Fernandez). An antisocial opportunist, Mapache uses the peoples' revolt as an excuse to take whatever and kill whomever he wants. Despite experiencing certain ethical misgivings, Bishop eventually agrees to help Mapache by stealing a shipment of weapons from the U.S. Army. This decision is one of several underscoring similarities between Bishop and Thornton, both of whom allow circumstances to release them to violate their codes of conduct.

In Peckinpah's West, the present is always receding too quickly into the past, as history intrudes on the rugged individualists who populate his films. Peckinpah, who co-wrote the screenplay for *The Wild Bunch* with Walon Green, does not overemphasize this point, however, introducing it subtly—the outlaws look on quizzically as an automobile rumbles past, for instance, an ominous sign of encroaching progress.

Casting aging actors such as Holden, Ryan, Borgnine, and Ben Johnson also helped demonstrate how time was catching up with the West. Holden, for instance, who was turning 50 when he made the film, makes Bishop seem increasingly burdened by his awareness of his own mortality.

Another of Peckinpah's westerns, *Ride the High Country* (1962), makes many of the same points made in *The Wild Bunch*; but the former film has an elegiac poignancy lacking in the latter. Just as the Old West was jolted by change, America changed drastically between 1962, when *Ride the High Country* was released, and 1969, when *The Wild Bunch* was released. This was particularly true in regard to the nation's sentiment concerning the Vietnam War. Just as many Americans were unable to reconcile themselves to a seemingly pointless, unwinnable war, Bishop's gang finds itself plunged into a situation that makes little sense. Because Bishop has allowed Angel to take some of the weapons so that his village can better defend itself, Mapache has the young Mexican tortured. The outlaws try to ignore his mistreatment because what, after all, can they do when they are so outnumbered. Then their strange ethical code kicks in—the idea that a man is not a man if he stands by and sees his friend slowly being killed. The outlaws are going to die anyway, so why not go out in a blaze of glory? Oddly violent notions of friendship, loyalty, honor, and being true to oneself—these are foundational elements within Peckinpah's slowly fading West.

See also: Peckinpah, Sam; Western, The

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—Michael Adams

WINCHESTER '73. One of Hollywood's landmark westerns, *Winchester '73* (1950) is marked by a moral and psychological complexity that had rarely been seen in this genre. The picture was also the first of a series of films that emerged from the prolific and productive partnerships that director Anthony Mann established with star James Stewart and screenwriter Borden Chase. Between 1950 and 1955, Mann and Stewart made eight films together, most of them psychological westerns in the mold of *Winchester '73*, with Chase writing three of them.

Winchester '73 follows cowboy Lin McAdam (Stewart), who, alongside his friend "High-Spade" Frankie Wilson (Millard Mitchell), is searching the West for Dutch Henry Brown (Stephen McNally), the man who murdered his father. This quest brings them to Dodge City, the location of a shooting contest that will be presided over by Wyatt Earp (Will Geer). A priceless "One in a Thousand" 1873 Winchester

rifle will be awarded as first prize, and McAdam knows that Dutch will be unable to resist competing for it. The depth of the men's animosity is immediately apparent when they first meet, as both men reach for the pistols Earp forced them to surrender upon entering town. Their long-standing and violently intimate relationship is further hinted at during the contest, when they exhibit identical shooting styles. In the final round, McAdam defeats Brown, claiming the Winchester. His victory is short-lived, however, as Brown and his comrades attack McAdam, steal the rifle, and flee town.

At this point, the film breaks into an innovative double narrative. One strand follows McAdam and High-Spade as they pursue Dutch into Texas, helping a cavalry unit fight off an Indian raid and meeting a beautiful showgirl, Lola Manners (Shelley Winters), along the way. The other thread follows the rifle itself as it passes from one owner to the next: from Dutch Henry it goes to a gun trader (John McIntire), an Indian chief on the warpath (Rock Hudson), Lola's cowardly fiancé (Charles Drake), and notorious gunslinger Waco Johnny Dean (Dan Duryea). Waco is a sometime ally of Dutch Henry, and it is here that the strands of the story reunite, for the two outlaws plan to rob a bank together. Seeing Waco in possession of "his" rifle, Dutch demands its return, and the gunslinger agrees. Afterward, he admits to Lola, whom he has kidnapped, that he plans to murder Dutch following the bank heist. McAdam and High-Spade help foil the robbery, gunning down Waco in the process. From Wilson we learn that Dutch is in fact McAdam's brother, and that Dutch killed their father. In the film's climactic showdown, McAdam gets revenge by killing Dutch and reclaiming the Winchester.

As they did in their later westerns, including *The Naked Spur* (1953) and *The Man from Laramie* (1955), Mann and Stewart challenged the traditional conventions of the genre in *Winchester '73*, questioning the use of violence to solve problems, examining the human cost of revenge, and focusing on a psychologically damaged protagonist. McAdam has given up everything to pursue his quarry, and when High-Spade asks what he will do after killing Dutch, McAdam can offer no clear plan for the future; he is consumed by his maniacal quest, rendering him unable to think of anything else. Indeed, while McAdam is clearly drawn to Lola, he is incapable of consummating their romance until he has killed Dutch. His obsession with avenging their father's death, it seems, prevents him from having any semblance of a normal life. Interestingly, though, in a sentimental turn, and one that breaks with the genre convention of the westerner as a loner, once he *has* killed Dutch, McAdam returns to Lola and is able to get on with the life his quest for vengeance had previously denied him.

See also: Western, The

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—Bryan Kvet

WITNESS. *Witness* (1985) was directed by Peter Weir, with screenplay by Earl W. Wallace and William Kelley, and music by Maurice Jarre. At the 1986 Academy Awards, *Witness* was nominated for eight Oscars including Best Actor, Best Director, and Best Music. The movie won two Oscars for Best Film Editing (Thom Noble) and Best Writing, Screenplay Written Directly for the Screen (Earl W. Wallace, William Kelley, Pamela Wallace). The movie was Australian director Weir's first Hollywood film, and Harrison Ford's first Academy Award nomination.

Witness uses the backdrop of a Pennsylvania Amish community to tell the story of an Amish woman, Rachel Lapp, and her son Samuel. Following the death of her husband, Rachel and her son leave their Lancaster County farm and travel to visit her sister in Baltimore. At a stopover en route, Samuel witnesses the brutal murder of a policeman in a Philadelphia train station bathroom. A detective, John Book, investigates the case, and he is wounded by the murderer. Realizing that Samuel is in danger, Book returns with Rachel and Samuel to Lancaster County to recover. Book's entry into the Amish community brings two cultures together—the traditional rural and the violent urban.

Weir uses music and dialogue sparingly, inviting viewers to rely on their senses of sight and sound. He creates scenes that rely only on sounds of the natural world or the voice, bringing the viewer closer to the reality of the Amish world, with its lack of electricity, television, or radio. We hear the sounds of horses' hooves on the pavement and the sound of a typewriter in the police station. On the farm, we hear the sounds of animals and the hammering of nails at a barn-raising. Maurice Jarre provides music on the synthesizer, an inspired instrumental contrast to the simplicity and traditional lifestyle of the Amish community. As the movie opens, we see a windswept field of wheat, and the simple tonal quality of the synthesizer provides a spiritual, transcendent mood to the scene. This mood and music take us through the scenes of the train ride and continue as Samuel wanders through the large train station, underscoring his wonder at these new sights.

Book brings the contemporary urban world into the Amish community. Yet, although he is an outsider, the simplicity of his name, John Book, implies that there is, perhaps, a link between this policeman who lives by violence, and the community for whom violence is anathema. Within this community Book recovers; adopts the plain, black clothing of the Amish; and is faced with the impact of the Amish culture on his life. There are several scenes of growing sexual tension between Book and Rachel, and she is warned of the punishment the community would mete out should she succumb to her desires. Both struggle to come to terms with the choice of leaving their own community. Although they do make love toward the end of the movie, Rachel is aware that in choosing to leave, the harm she would bring on her son and her community would be permanent and beyond repair. When she realizes that Book will return to Philadelphia, she struggles for confirmation when speaking with her father-in-law Eli. "But why?" she asks. "What's he going back to? Nothing . . ." Eli states what she knows to be true: "He's going back to his world, where he belongs. He knows it . . . and you know it too."

The theme of witnessing runs throughout the movie. Initially it is the boy Samuel who witnesses a horrific murder. Book himself is witness to the traditional ways of

the Amish community and is drawn into its daily life. The community is witness to the growing relationship between Rachel and Book and is quick to show its displeasure. However, the climax of the film comes when the murderer and his accomplices arrive at the farm to kill Book and Samuel. The entire community is assembled as if “bearing witness” to the destructive force they have actively shunned. Book takes strength from the community around him, and, in the last scenes, instead of using violence, he uses words to end the brutality. As Book finally leaves the farm, Eli says to him: “You be careful out there among the English.” This is as close as the two cultures will get—Book has found a different way of reacting to violence, and Eli has expanded his realm of possibilities to include the “English” man Book.

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—Vicky Bach

WIZARD OF OZ, THE. *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) is a musical motion picture, directed by Victor Fleming and produced by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM). Based on L. Frank Baum’s children’s novel *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900), the film tells the story of Dorothy Gale, a troubled young farm girl from Kansas, who is transported on a fantastic journey to the Land of Oz, and ultimately comes to realize that “there’s no place like home.”

The film juxtaposes drab, sepia-toned images of heartland America against the brilliant Technicolor of Oz, as it delivers an explicit message that the search for happiness only brings the seeker back to his or her roots. The routines and minor heartaches of daily life in Kansas with her Aunt Em (Clara Blandick) and Uncle Henry (Charles Grapewin), seem unbearable to young Dorothy (played by 16-year-old Judy Garland), until she finds herself swept away—house and all—by a raging tornado. Jarred as the house abruptly hits the ground, Dorothy opens the door to discover that she has been delivered into the exquisite Land of Oz. Wandering from the house, she finds that she has killed a wicked witch, come into possession of a pair of magical ruby slippers, and engendered the enmity of the first witch’s (even more) wicked sister. Desperate to find her way home, Dorothy—along with her dog, Toto, and her newfound friends, a Scarecrow (Ray Bolger) in need of a brain, a Tin Man (Jack Haley) in need of a heart, and a Cowardly Lion (Bert Lahr) in need of courage—embarks on a quest down the Yellow Brick Road to find the Emerald City, home of the Wizard of Oz.

The MGM adaptation of Baum’s book was not the first—it was preceded by two silent films, *His Majesty, the Scarecrow of Oz* (1914) and *The Wizard of Oz* (1925),



The Scarecrow, played by Ray Bolger, and Dorothy, played by Judy Garland, encounter some hazards on the way to Oz in the 1939 film *The Wizard of Oz*. Along with *Gone with the Wind*, *The Wizard of Oz* was one of the most famous movies of the 1930s. (AP/Wide World Photos)

directed by Larry Semon—but it is considered to be the definitive cinematic version of the story. The script, crafted by Noel Langley, Florence Ryerson, and Edgar Allan Woolf, differs from the novel in several ways, with characters and events expanded or deleted to suit the new medium. Most significantly, while the cinematic Oz is cast as a dream, the literary Oz was intended to be an actual place—one to which Dorothy would return in later adventures. Color, throughout the film, precisely delineates the boundaries between fantasy and reality: the scenes in Kansas were shot in black and white but given a uniform sepia tint that suggested both the warm familiarity of old photographs and the sun-bleached grimness of the Dust Bowl. The Oz scenes, on the other hand, have the vibrant, saturated colors made possible by the three-strip Technicolor process. This sharp distinction underscores the film's central message: dusty-brown Kansas is, for Dorothy, preferable to vibrant Oz because it is real and because in the fantasy of Oz, there *is* “no place like home.”

Throughout their journey, the seekers experience breathtaking wonders and curiosities: the Munchkins, flying monkeys, talking trees, a horse that changes color (the proverbial “horse of a different color”), and the Wizard himself (Frank Morgan). The Emerald City proves, however, to be a hollow world of spectacle and illusions.

The fearsome disembodied face and booming voice of the Wizard are merely elaborate special effects, and the “wizard” who produces them proves to have neither great powers nor magical gifts to bestow. The Wicked Witch of the West (Margaret Hamilton), who pursues and threatens Dorothy throughout the film, dissolves away into nothingness when accidentally splashed with water, and even Dorothy’s main ally, Glinda, the Good Witch of the North (Billie Burke), appears and disappears in a translucent bubble. Oz’s lack of real substance reflects the film’s central conceit and key departure from Baum’s book: the idea that Dorothy’s adventures in Oz are elements in some sophisticated dream, with friends and foes that are no more than thinly disguised versions of characters from her real life. The redemptive ending—a symbolic and literal coming-of-age moment that finds Dorothy happily restored to her Kansas home—celebrates her transition from rebellious, dissatisfied child to appreciative young adult, who, possessing a more mature outlook, cheerfully accepts—indeed embraces—her social and familial role.

Far from simply a moral message for children, *The Wizard of Oz* is laden with meaning for adults, as well, reflecting the anxieties and concerns of its era. In fact, at the time of its release, a review in *Variety* magazine observed that “Oz has a message well-timed to current events.” Those events—the Great Depression and the enactment of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal—shaped the political-economic landscape from which the film emerged, and for many, were reflected in its allegorical storyline. According to E. Y. “Yip” Harburg, the lyricist honored with an Academy Award for the film’s iconic song “Over the Rainbow,” the Emerald City was, in fact, the New Deal—the bright, shining hope of Depression-era Americans, desperately in need of the confidence to shape their own destinies. In a way uncharacteristic of most cinematic songwriters, Harburg, who actively supported Roosevelt’s policies, crafted lyrics that shaped the film’s message, and served as a celebration of the country’s benevolent “Wizard” and the New Deal programs that led the American heartland “out of the woods . . . out of the dark . . . into the light.”

As Dorothy found, though, that light emanates not from the Emerald City—nor by extension, the promises and programs of Roosevelt’s New Deal—but from the values already present in the American heartland. Oz, for Dorothy, is a land of anxiety and confusion, where the norms of everyday life are discarded, and the wonders of prosperity are freely available rather than earned. The Wizard, while “a very good man,” is in fact, “a very bad wizard”—a fraud, hidden from view—his power deriving solely from his ability to create beautiful and fearsome illusions. Through her newfound friends, however, Dorothy learns lessons of substance: the values of community, ingenuity, hard work, and faith. Only by making common cause with the Scarecrow, Tin Man, Cowardly Lion, and even Toto is she able to overcome adversity and see through the Wizard’s facade. Her belief in his power comes to nothing; her belief in herself and her friends, however, restores order and happiness.

The film made its first appearance on television in 1956, as part of CBS’s *Ford Star Jubilee* anthology series, after which the network continued to air it annually, until 1991, establishing the story and its characters as indelible parts of American popular culture. Cited by the Library of Congress as the most watched film in history, it was among the first titles of “cultural, historical, or aesthetic significance” to be named to

the National Film Registry (1989). A television event that continues through the present day, *The Wizard of Oz* has been subject to remakes, spin-offs, and commercial tie-ins for decades, ranging from the Broadway hit *Wicked*, to “Dorothy” cookie jars, to bumper stickers that urge “Run, Toto, run!”

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—Cynthia J. Miller and A. Bowdoin Van Riper

WOMAN OF THE YEAR. *Woman of the Year* features the legendary screen duo Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn in their first film appearance together. Hepburn plays Tess Harding, an international reporter for a New York City newspaper who is wrapped up in the events of World War II. Audiences in the 1940s would have noticed how Hepburn’s character mirrored the real life of renowned journalist Dorothy Thompson. Spencer Tracy plays Sam Craig, a sports journalist who takes up the cause of basic American values. *Woman of the Year* was both a box-office and critical success. It earned Hepburn an Academy Award nomination for Best Actress and brought home Oscars for Original Writing and Original Screenplay. (Miller, 2008)

Woman of the Year was produced prior to the United States entry into World War II—its release date was January 1942—yet it revealed the issues presented by wartime exigencies. Tess states in a radio interview that perhaps baseball should be suspended during the war. Sam is incensed with her comments, and the war of the sexes begins in the public and personal lives of the two journalists. Their animosity fades into love and they are married; however, this is not a simple happily-ever-after story. Tess, as the embodiment of 1940s feminism, maintains her independence and public life, much like the characters played by Bette Davis in *Front Page Woman* and Rosalind Russell in *His Girl Friday*. All three of these influential female stars, playing assertive and yet extremely attractive female journalists, reflected significant American cultural trends expressed during this era. Ms. Hepburn’s portrayal of an independent career woman, glamorous, opinionated, and sexy in trousers, paralleled the wartime role American women would be asked to assume after Pearl Harbor. Her intelligence, political savvy, and autonomy were as essential to the war effort as the activities of the soldiers, the no-nonsense all-American males portrayed by the stoic Mr. Tracy. In February 1942, *New York Times* film critic Bosley Crowther gave *Woman of the Year* a “triumphant” review. He commented that the film would appeal emotionally to average Americans, both male and female. He described a scene in the film when a radio announcer asked a group of men surrounding Tracy at the local coffeeshop to list the two current topics most frequently

discussed by average American citizens. The answer was obvious: war and sports. The romantic comedy played out by Tracy and Hepburn made these topics fair game.

Men of the 1940s respected the hard work and wit of their women, but they still wanted a feminine domestic partner. As historian Nancy Woloch suggests, by the 1940s the image of the intelligent, wage-earning woman gave way to a female heroine who put her traditional gender roles as wife and mother first. Thus, it is not surprising that after Sam leaves Tess because she is too self-centered, she ultimately comes to her senses, offering to give up her career if her husband will have her back. American society expected its women to return to the home and give up their jobs when the war was over. William Mann commented in the *New York Times* (2007) that Katharine Hepburn would always lose in the Hollywood films when she and Tracy engaged in a battle of the sexes. He suggests that the film star understood that American postwar culture might allow some celebration of female independence; but in the end, she would have to give in to male authority.

See also: Hepburn, Katharine; Romantic Comedy, The; Women in Film

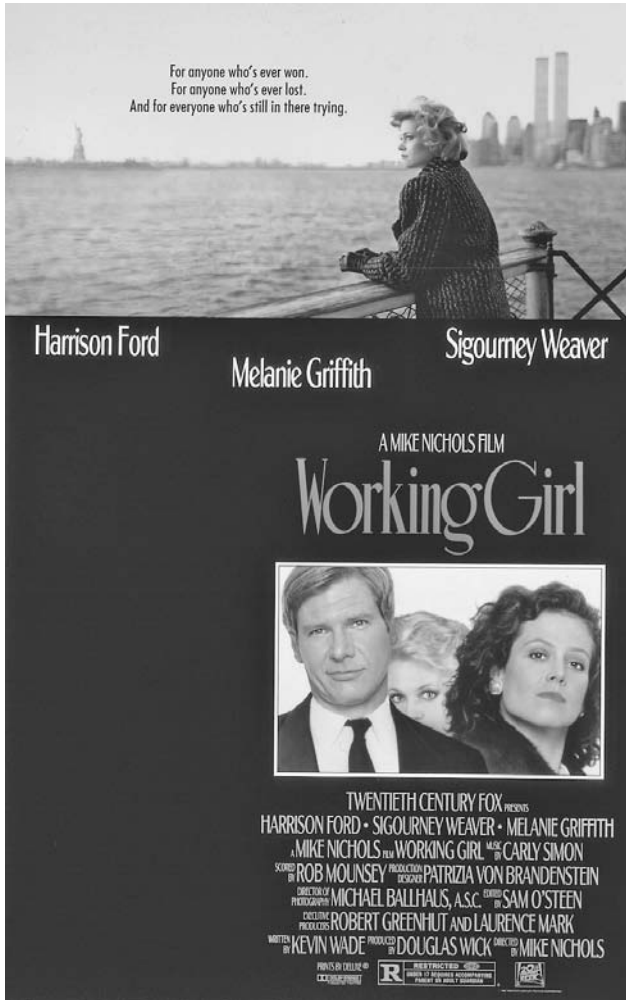
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—Katharina Tumpek-Kjellmark

WORKING GIRL. *Working Girl*, starring Melanie Griffith as Tess McGill, Sigourney Weaver as Katharine Parker, and Harrison Ford as Jack Trainer, explores the social networks of 1980s corporate America. Tess, a secretary with ambition and "street smarts," finds herself working for Katharine, a no-nonsense captain of industry whose business practices are proven to be questionable. After a skiing accident keeps Katharine out of the office, Tess takes advantage of the situation to forward to Jack a business idea she had originally pitched to Katharine, an idea that Katharine intends to claim as her own. The working relationship between Tess and Katharine is further complicated by the fact that Jack and Katharine have been involved in an ill-fated, and seemingly sterile, personal relationship—one that is ending as Jack and Tess begin their own romantic involvement. Tess's ambition and intelligence ultimately serve her well, and by the end of the film she has become a high-paid executive, while Katharine has been embarrassed in front of colleagues and faces the possibility that she will be forced from her job as a result of her unethical behavior with Tess.

The relatively small percentage of women who made it to the highest positions in corporate America during the 1980s found themselves in the awkward position of being outsiders on the inside. This idea is expressed in the film's opening scene, which focuses on a commuter ferry making its way into Manhattan from the New Jersey



Poster for the 1988 film *Working Girl*, starring Sigourney Weaver, Harrison Ford, and Melanie Griffith, peeking out from behind her two co-stars. Directed by Mike Nichols. (Photofest)

shore—the alternating shots of the crowds of commuters and the Statue of Liberty are meant to remind viewers of the immigrants that built America; just as these foreigners were assimilated into America’s burgeoning multicultural society, women during the 1980s were being assimilated into the corporate world and proving themselves to be valuable players in that high-powered community. Yet, even though these women came to be integral parts of the workforce, they still found themselves largely excluded from it.

The character of Tess embodies the struggles facing women and the efforts they made during this period to prove themselves essential components of corporate America. Tess’s lack of a degree from a prestigious university, for instance—she received her degree “with honors,” but from night school, as she is reminded during the course of the film—is held against her, and although she proves that she is intelligent as well as intuitive, she is still relegated to working as a temp-agency secretary throughout the early part of the picture. In an effort to improve

herself professionally, Tess is taking business and diction courses and seeking to land a “serious” job in the upper echelons of the corporate community.

The film sets Tess and Katharine in juxtapositional tension. Katharine has been accepted into the corporate “old boys club” and personifies its practices. Significantly, although she, just like her male counterparts, is every bit the cool professional, in business settings she distinguishes herself by wearing bright-colored clothing and even hinting that sexual favors are in the offing should the right deal present itself. Thus, Katharine is portrayed as having climbed the corporate ladder both by becoming just like her unscrupulous male colleagues and by at least implying that she is willing to

compromise her own sense of self by sleeping her way to the top. Tess, on the other hand, although she is portrayed as having a “head for business and bod for sin,” struggles to break free from the trap of being valued only for her looks and what she can provide men in the bedroom, instead of being valued for what she has to offer in the boardroom. Interestingly, while finally rejecting everything that Katharine represents, Tess becomes both the executive and the woman she wants to be by embracing, and expressing, the much more ethical, and sensitive, ideals of Jack—the corporate male who is aggressive and yet refuses to compromise his own integrity to “get the deal done.” In the end, Tess and Jack, who value each other for all the right reasons, are perfect together.

Working Girl, then, not only depicts the struggle that women faced when they began entering the upper echelons of the business community during the 1980s, it also reminds us, in a wonderfully provocative way, that ability, hard work, and commitment should mean more, even in the corporate world, than do gender and class.

See also: Women in Film

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—*Elise Guest*

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YANKEE DOODLE DANDY. The George M. Cohan biopic *Yankee Doodle Dandy* (1942) illustrates how historical films often reveal as much about the era in which they are made as the one they depict. Ostensibly about the American composer/performer's amazing run of Broadway hits from the 1900s through the 1930s, the success of this biographical film can be explained more by timeliness than the particularity of its take on Cohan. With a release date in early 1942, just after the attack on Pearl Harbor in late 1941, the composer's patriotic World War I-era hits "Over There" and "You're a Grand Old Flag" were newly relevant and ready for revival. The rhetorical high point of the film excerpts a scene from his starring role in the 1937 Rodgers and Hart musical *I'd Rather Be Right*. The emphatic performance of lines added to address current global conflict—"We'll take [France] back from Hitler and put ants in his 'Japants' and that's *for* the record"—underscore the imperative of producers to make this a timely World War II-era film.

Yankee traces Cohan's (James Cagney) rise to fame from his days as a young boy when he traveled as part of the Four Cohans, his family's vaudeville act. This context represents a significant point of departure from many other musical biopics, which typically work in the mode of *The Jazz Singer* (1927), in which the musical prodigy's enthusiasm for popular music is questioned by his religious and traditional family. As George successfully capitalizes on his superior talents at a very early age, it is his own egoism that provides the film's earliest conflict. Cohan outgrows his youthful cockiness and serves his country as a diligent patriot. The film's treatment of the composer as an American icon is, in fact, explicitly discussed when Cohan's producer, Sam (Richard Whorf), tries to recruit a more highbrow Broadway singer, Fay Templeton (Irene Manning), to perform his songs. Fay initially resists, saying she will only perform in a "quiet, dignified musical play," and that Cohan's work represents "loud, vulgar, flag waving." Sam takes Fay to task for her elitism, explaining his understanding of American taste and convincing her to "hitch your wagon to his star right now." Cohan, Sam argues, is "the whole darn country squeezed into a pair of pants . . . [he] invented the success story. And every American loves it because it happens to be his own private dream. He's found the mainspring in the Yankee clock: ambition, pride, and patriotism."



James Cagney performing in *Yankee Doodle Dandy*. Undated movie still. (Bettmann/Corbis)

Fitting this aggrandized portrayal of an American individual, and the reputation of its studio director Michael Curtiz, *Yankee Doodle Dandy* is much more a star vehicle than an auteurist masterpiece. James Cagney, chosen by Cohan himself after Fred Astaire turned down the role, was afforded the opportunity to play against type. Cagney typically played violent, masculine characters, so this film gave the actor a chance to dramatically expand his range. Cagney's upbeat, surprisingly dance-heavy performance was rewarded with his only Academy Award for Best Actor.

Production memos reveal how fully Cohan involved himself in the adaptation process, often to the aggravation of the producers; at one point "Cohan read [the initial] script with great interest—then tossed it aside and immediately countered with one of his own, numbering 170 pages" (Tibbetts, 2005). Along with the new script, Cohan included a revealing note: "To my mind the only sweetheart *your hero* can have in the early stages is the theater itself" (130). Here, far from insisting on any strict fidelity to his life story, Cohan, incredibly, describes himself in the third person, as a stock character under the ownership of the producers. In this respect, the composer and the film's staff were in agreement. Similarly, Cohan cited certain facts of his life—multiple marriages, opposition to labor unions, and disputes with popular critics—that would be best left offscreen (129–30). The producers concurred on these omissions, and the film

depicted, according to Cohan's daughter, "the kind of life that Daddy would like to have lived!" (102).

See also: Cagney, James; Music in Film; Musical, The

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—Jesse Schlotterbeck

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PEOPLE

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ALLEN, DEDE. Dede Allen was one of Hollywood's most important and innovative screen editors. Indeed, during the 1960s and 1970s, she was one of the most sought-after editors in the industry. Allen was nominated several times for Academy Awards and sat on the Board of Governors of the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences.

Born Dorothea Caruthers on December 3, 1923, in Cleveland, Ohio, Allen came from a middle-class family. Her father worked for Union Carbide and, until she was married, her mother was an Edwardian stage actress. Influenced by her mother's love for the movies, Allen viewed as many films as she was able while she was young. Educated in Europe, she left for Hollywood in 1943 in order to become a director. Initially forced to work as a messenger for Columbia Studios, within a year of being hired, she was promoted to the sound editing department, where she began as an assistant sound editor. She spent her nights working at the Actor's Lab, a Hollywood theater company made up mostly of expatriate New Yorkers. Allen credits the Actor's Lab with teaching her how to structure dramatic scenes.

As more and more men who worked in the film industry were sent overseas during WWII, job opportunities opened up for women; it was at this point that Allen became a sound editor at Columbia. In 1945, she married Stephen Fleischman, who would ultimately work as a writer, director, and producer in television. Between 1945 and 1950, Allen took time out to have a family and moved to New York. She had one son, Tom Fleischman, who later became a sound editor. Still in New York, Allen took a job at a commercial movie company, Filmgraphics, working there as an editor, sound editor, and script girl. In 1957, she edited a film short, *Endowing Your Future*, and in 1958, a grade-B feature film, *Terror from the Year 5000*, also known as *Cage of Doom*.

In 1959, director Robert Wise, who edited both *Citizen Kane* and *The Magnificent Ambersons* for Orson Welles, hired Allen to edit *Odds against Tomorrow* (1959), a film noir shot in New York, that featured Harry Belafonte and Robert Ryan. Wise encouraged Allen to experiment with the scenes, and he was very pleased with the final cut. Recognizing her enormous talent, Robert Rossen brought her on to edit his 1961 masterpiece *The Hustler*. The film was nominated for numerous Oscars,

including those for Best Picture; Best Director; Best Actor, for Paul Newman; and Best Supporting Actor, for Jackie Gleason (although also nominated for a Best Supporting Actor award, George C. Scott refused the nomination). Allen was nominated by the American Cinema Editors, USA for its award for best Edited Feature Film.

Perhaps Allen's greatest career achievement came with the 1968 film *Bonnie and Clyde*. Allen's editing of this iconic film was revolutionary, innovative, and extraordinarily influential, and after the picture was released, she became one of the most sought-after editors in the industry. Continuing to work on feature films, she also began training novice editors, eventually establishing what came to be known as the New York School of Editing. Her students included Jerry Greenberg, Evan Lottman, Barry Malkin, Richard Marks, Jim Miller, and Steven Rotter.

After her success with *Bonnie and Clyde*, Allen would go on to edit such pictures as *Rachel, Rachel* (1968), *Alice's Restaurant* (1969), *Little Big Man* (1970), *Slaughterhouse Five* (1972), *Serpico* (1973), and *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975), for which she was nominated for an Academy Award. While she did not win the Oscar, she did win the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) award for film editing. She continued her work through the 1970s and '80s, editing such pictures as *The Missouri Breaks* (1976); *Slap Shot* (1977); *The Wiz* (1978); Warren Beatty's *Reds* (1981), which she co-produced and for which she was again nominated for an Academy Award; *The Breakfast Club* (1985); *The Milagro Beanfield War* (1988); *Henry and June* (1990); *The Addams Family* (1991); and 2001's *Wonder Boys*, for which she received yet another Oscar nomination.

In 1992, Warner Bros. executives persuaded Allen to move to California to become the Vice-President in Charge of Creative Development at their studio. She was eventually promoted to Senior Vice-President in Charge of Creative Development. She served on the board of trustees for the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, representing the Film Editors branch; and also as the vice president of the Board of Directors of the Motion Picture Editors Guild. Although she never won an Oscar for her work as an editor, Allen won a Crystal Award from Women in Film, a Career Achievement Award from the American Cinema Editors, and a Fellowship and Service Award from the Motion Picture Editors Guild. Allen died on April 17, 2010; she was 86.

Selected Filmography

John Q (2002); *Wonder Boys* (2000); *The Addams Family* (1991); *Henry & June* (1990); *Let It Ride* (1989); *The Milagro Beanfield War* (1988); *The Breakfast Club* (1985); *Reds* (1981); *The Wiz* (1978); *Slap Shot* (1977); *The Missouri Breaks* (1976); *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975); *Night Moves* (1975); *Serpico* (1973); *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1972); *Little Big Man* (1970); *Alice's Restaurant* (1969); *Rachel, Rachel* (1968); *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967); *America, America* (1963); *The Hustler* (1961); *Odds against Tomorrow* (1959); *Because of Eve* (1948)

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—Scott Sheidlower

ALLEN, WOODY. A legendary filmmaker and consummate auteur, Woody Allen has been writing and directing films since 1966. Since 1969 he has averaged one movie per year. His unique style generally favors the script and actors over avant-garde cinematic techniques and special effects. While he occasionally experiments with narrative techniques, his films are noted for complex characters, long scenes of dialogue, and location shoots. He is one of a few filmmakers who retains complete creative control over his films.

Allan Stewart Konigsberg was born December 1, 1935 in Brooklyn, New York, to Nettie and Martin Konigsberg. His mother was a bookkeeper and his father a jeweler. While Allen's parents were both born and raised on Manhattan's Lower East Side, Allen and his sister were raised in middle-class Brooklyn, where he attended public schools. After high school Allen attended NYU, but didn't apply himself and was eventually expelled.

Even before he graduated from high school, Allen was ghostwriting jokes for Sammy Kaye, Guy Lombardo, and Arthur Murray. After he dropped out of college, he signed with the William Morris Agency to write comedy skits for Pat Boone, Buddy Hackett, and others. In 1953, he left for Hollywood to work on the *Colgate Comedy Hour* for NBC. While he was in Hollywood he met Danny Simon, the brother of Neil Simon, who became his mentor. In 1956, Allen returned to New York, where he wrote nightclub routines for a number of celebrities. In 1958, he left the William Morris Agency and formed a business relationship with Jack Rollins and Charles Joffe, who launched his film career and continue to work with him, producing most of his films. During the 1960s Allen wrote for television and worked as a stand-up comic, touring the country and appearing frequently on *The Tonight Show*. His film career began in 1965 with the box-office hit, *What's New Pussycat?*, which he scripted. Since then he has written and directed over 40 films.

Allen is a prolific filmmaker. Every year he has a film in release, one in production, and one he is writing. His filmmaking approach, which is based on a restricted number of takes and tight schedules, keeps his budgets low (currently around \$12 million per picture) and allows him to keep to his rigorously defined timetable. Allen is philosophical about his filmmaking vision, something reflected in the movies he creates. For instance, in *Manhattan*, which Allen co-wrote, Yale (Michael Murphy) suggests that "the essence of art is to provide a certain working through of the situation for people, so that you can get in touch with feelings that you didn't know that you had." This notion emphasizes the therapeutic value of art for the artist. Indeed, films such as *Stardust Memories*, *Deconstructing Harry*, and *Vicky Cristina Barcelona*, emphasize the point that art exists for the sake of the artist, often with only a peripheral regard for the



Director Woody Allen attends the premiere of his film *Match Point* at the 58th International Cannes Film Festival on May 12, 2005 in Cannes. From an early career as a gag writer and stand-up comic, Allen became one of America's foremost independent filmmakers. (MJ Kim/Getty Images)

audience. Reflecting this sense of art as a process of creative “working through of the situation,” Allen’s films frequently repeat subjects he approached in previous work: *Manhattan* is a more refined version of *Annie Hall*, *Hannah and Her Sisters* fleshes out some of the ambiguities in *Interiors*, while *Match Point* deals with the same issues as *Crimes and Misdemeanors*. For Allen, then, it seems that art is also becoming and, perhaps, never arrives.

Allen’s films can be divided into three periods: his early slapstick-comedy and Diane Keaton films; his Mia Farrow period; and his post-Mia Farrow period. (Allen had long-term, intimate relationships with both women.) Allen’s early films relied heavily on slapstick and visual comedy. During this period he developed the Chaplinesque character, most often played by Allen himself, of the lovable, anxious schlemiel. With *Annie Hall*, Allen moved toward the seriocomedy he would master in the 1980s. A romantic comedy that deals with the com-

plexity of intimate relationships, *Annie Hall* also relies on various forms of comedy to ease the filmic tension Allen masterfully creates in this film. In the 1980s, Allen’s films relied more on situational comedy and situational irony than on physical comedy, as his early films had. The result is a period of filmmaking that more closely examines the nature of relationships and growth into middle age, what might be termed “mature comedies.”

While many critics consider his Mia Farrow years to be his best, after his relationship with Farrow ended, his films became more diverse in form and content. (An acrimonious split between Allen and Farrow led to court battles over their adopted and biological children and Allen ultimately marrying the much younger Soon-Yi Previn, the adopted daughter of Farrow and Andre Previn, who had lived with Farrow and Allen while the two were together.). *Everyone Says I Love You* (1996) is a musical, while films like *Sweet and Lowdown* (1999) and *Match Point* (2005) bear little resemblance in

style to any of Allen's previous films. Also, he began casting other actors in the "Woody Allen" character: John Cusack in *Bullets over Broadway* (1994), Kenneth Branagh in *Celebrity* (1998), and Will Ferrell in *Melinda and Melinda* (2004). In 2004, Allen made the greatest change in his film career: he started shooting films in England. New York City had become an integral part of his films; but artistically the change in location, said Allen, was necessary for him to view the world differently. Many of the themes Allen has dealt with in the past are there, but English and European culture play a role in the narrative. While frustrated with Hollywood's current business model, which favors blockbusters, Allen sees the move in pragmatic terms: European audiences tend to embrace his films more than American audiences.

Interestingly, especially because Allen, both in his personal life and in his films, seems hopelessly unable to determine "what women want," he has directed more women in Oscar-nominated roles than any other living filmmaker. A close examination of Allen's films reveals that most of them reflect his desire to understand women. This may appear directly, as in films such as *Interiors*, *Alice*, *Purple Rose of Cairo*, and *Vicky Cristina Barcelona*, or indirectly, through the male characters' relationships with women, in films like *Annie Hall*, *Crimes and Misdemeanors*, *Hannah and Her Sisters* (which covers all manner of sins), and *Match Point*. Setting the stage for most of the films that follow, *Annie Hall* explores Alvy Singer's attempt to come to terms with his relationship with women—and Annie in particular. The nature of women is a recurring theme in Allen's films. Films like *Interiors*, *September*, *Alice*, and *Vicky Cristina Barcelona* (none of which Allen appears in as an actor) focus on female protagonists and examine personal relationships from the female perspective. These characters are carefully and deeply wrought, and within each film reveal different aspects of the feminine psyche.

Sex is also a prominent and recurring theme in Allen's films. The 1970s emerged as an era in America during which sexuality could be discussed more openly. While never graphically portrayed in his films, the omnipresence of sex through innuendo, jokes, or postcoital conversations, reflected society's changing attitudes toward sexuality. But beneath the jokes and shock value created by the frank discussions of the subject in his early films (*Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Sex* and *Sleeper*), Allen presents viewers epistemological inquiries into human sexuality. For instance, in one scene in *Annie Hall*, also co-written by Allen, in a postcoital moment between Alvy (Allen) and Annie (Keaton), Alvy rolls over, turns on the light, and says, "As Balzac said, 'there goes another novel.'" This statement directly addresses the creative impulse expressed in both the sexual and the artistic moment. Allen, it seems, is suggesting that the creative impulse can be expressed through art or sexuality, but that for the artist, and by extension humanity in general, sexual desire tends to pervert what he understands as the transcendent quality of creativity. Indeed, in many of Allen's films, the artist is compromised by his sexual desires.

Another prominent motif in Allen's films is the city of New York. His recent European films notwithstanding, New York City plays a significant role in almost all of his work. Allen himself has stated that *Manhattan* is his homage to New York, and *Hannah and Her Sisters* offers an architectural tour of the city. The city shapes Allen's

characters, and is integral to his plots. Indeed, the *absence* of the city in *A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy* underscores the *significance* of the city in modern America. As the primary symbol of American modernity, Allen appears to be saying that the city acts to repress humanity's innate carnal desires; only in some Burkeian place of the sublime, then, can humanity's essential self finally emerge. Because Allen's characters, in both his comedies and his dramatic films, are so often repressed, so often representative of charmingly neurotic figures struggling mightily to disclose their own inner selves, it is not surprising that this brilliant director places most of them in the city, in *the* American city, New York City.

Allen continues to make films and gather awards. By 2009, he had received 46 Academy Award nominations and taken home the top prize 10 times. While most of his nominations have been for screenwriting, for which he holds the record at 14, most of his wins have gone to women who have acted in his films.

See also: Annie Hall; Manhattan

Selected Filmography

Midnight in Paris (2011); *Whatever Works* (2009); *Vicky Cristina Barcelona* (2008); *Match Point* (2005); *Deconstructing Harry* (1997); *Mighty Aphrodite* (1995); *Husbands and Wives* (1992); *Shadows and Fog* (1991); *Crimes and Misdemeanors* (1989); *Hannah and Her Sisters* (1986); *A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy* (1982); *Manhattan* (1979); *Interiors* (1978); *Annie Hall* (1977); *Sleeper* (1973); *Bananas* (1971)

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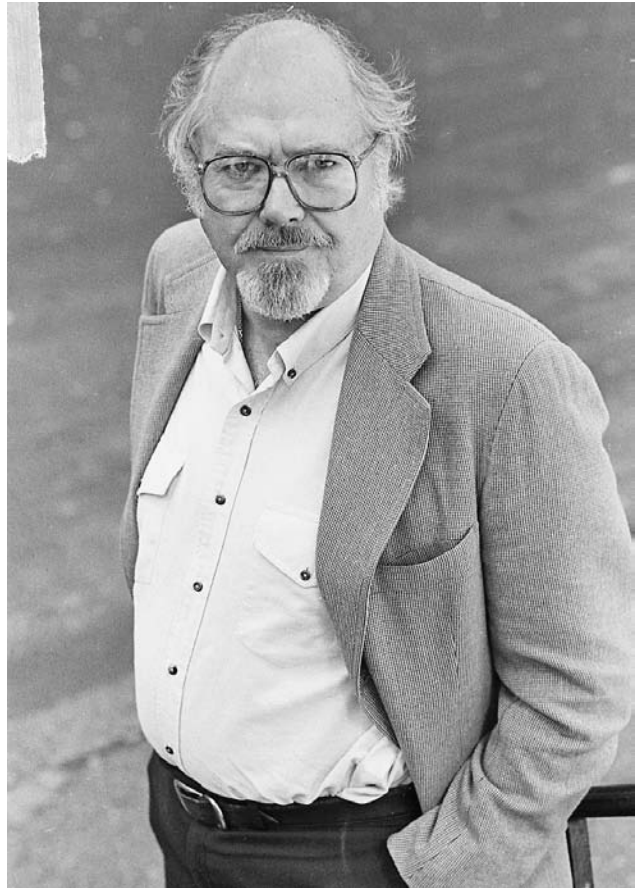
—Dean R. Cooleage

ALTMAN, ROBERT. Robert Altman's satirical, multi-layered, absurdist, and thematically complex films are reminiscent, in their personal vision and artistic daring, of European art cinema—except that Altman could not touch anything without making it strangely and irreducibly American. Not often a successful box-office director, Altman nevertheless got to do pretty much what he wanted, as he wanted, for most of his career. As he put it late in life, what director could have asked for more?

Born in Kansas City, Missouri, on February 20, 1925, Altman went to private school and joined the Air Force in 1945 to serve as a bombardier in World War II.

After the war he broke into early TV, and cut his teeth in the 1950s and 1960s directing and writing a variety of TV episodes, particularly westerns such as *Bonanza*.

Altman's breakthrough came in 1970 when he was given the chance to direct the Korean War hospital comedy *M*A*S*H** after, as the joke has it, every last director left in Hollywood said no to the project. His two stars, Elliott Gould and Donald Sutherland, thought he was inept, and tried to get him fired. Altman's methods were unconventional to say the least: he threw out most of screenwriter Ring Lardner Jr.'s dialogue, and prompted his ensemble cast to improvise a series of comic moments. If the executives at Twentieth Century-Fox had known that Altman was following no plot, had adopted an impertinent improvisational antiwar tone, and was beginning his experimentation with overlapping dialogue, they probably would have shut the production



Film director Robert Altman poses in New York City on September 20, 1981. (AP/Wide World Photos)

down. But they were preoccupied overseeing their mammoth WWII epic *Tora! Tora! Tora!*, and left Altman alone. By the end of the year *Tora! Tora! Tora!* became one of the biggest box-office and critical disasters of all time, and *M*A*S*H**, setting the tone for a new generation's resistance to staid Hollywood approaches, won the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival; garnered a host of Academy Award nominations, including Best Picture and Best Director; and was a box-office smash.

The success gave Altman a chance to fulfill his dream of becoming one of the most independent-minded directors in an era of independent-minded directors. After making *M*A*S*H**, Altman began his most fertile creative period—the 1970s. In film after film, he developed a distinct tone and a style, making him one of the most identifiable directors working in Hollywood. He called his method the “Gypsy caravan style” of filmmaking, an unusual collaborative approach enhanced by on-the-set improvisation and his famous roaming, floating camera. The best films of the period included his revisionist western *McCabe and Mrs. Miller* (1971), starring Warren Beatty and Julie Christie in what critic Pauline Kael called a “beautiful pipe-dream”; *The Long Goodbye*

(1973), one of the best and most underrated films of the 1970s, starring Elliott Gould as a mumbling version of Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe; *Thieves Like Us* (1974), a lyrical Depression-era crime film that Kael called a masterpiece; and, preeminently, *Nashville* (1975), Altman's political epic centered in America's country music capital, his most ambitious film to date and his most critically acclaimed.

But the critics, with the exception of Pauline Kael, were not always flattering in their reviews, and the box-office results for Altman were usually disappointing. After a series of bizarre critical and financial failures in the late 1970s, including the surreal *3 Women* (1977) and *Quintet* (1979), a futuristic apocalyptic dream set in the Arctic and seen by practically no one, even Kael turned her back on Altman, and he was considered poison by every Hollywood studio. The nadir of his career was when Twentieth Century-Fox refused to release his comedy *Health* (1980), and Altman, faced with debts, was shortly thereafter forced to sell his production company, Lions Gate, and to take jobs shooting wedding videos.

Some American lives not only have second acts, but third and fourth acts, as well. Altman remade himself in the 1980s, directing a series of small-budget film versions of successful contemporary American plays, including David Rabe's *Streamers* (1983) and Sam Shepard's *Fool for Love* (1985). These films were respectful adaptations of stage plays, perhaps not fully conceived as films in their own right, but an antidote to the increasingly blockbuster-conscious Hollywood, and a spur to the growing independent cinema movement. The films kept Altman working and gained him critical respect.

In the 1990s, a few significant films brought him back to new heights of respectability and importance. *The Player* (1992), starring Tim Robbins as a Hollywood studio executive driven to murder, was a stunningly incisive and entertaining critique of Hollywood politics and aesthetics, as well as a devastating moral indictment of yuppie values, and it showed Altman at his most audacious and playful. He followed *The Player* with *Short Cuts* (1993), an adaptation of a series of Raymond Carver short stories that in style and complexity was reminiscent of *Nashville*, had the latter been darker-toned, as it investigated American social decay in and around Los Angeles.

Altman received his fifth Academy Award nomination for *Gosford Park* (2001), a charming 1930s "upstairs downstairs" period piece set in a manor house in England that employed his usual stylistic methods. His last film, the marvelously unpredictable *A Prairie Home Companion* (2006), seemed almost an indirect pastiche of *Nashville*, and reminded audiences of Altman's marvelous capacity to create surprising comic tonalities, and to inform his films with a buoyant atmosphere of happy ensembles.

Having never won a Best Director Oscar, he was awarded the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Lifetime Achievement Award in 2006. He died on November 20 of that year. Altman had been working on a number of projects, still seeking to map out his large-spirited and unpredictable vision of America's dreamers and misanthropes.

Selected Filmography

A Prairie Home Companion (2006); *The Company* (2003); *Gosford Park* (2001); *Dr T and the Women* (2000); *Cookie's Fortune* (1999); *The Gingerbread Man* (1998); *Kansas City* (1996);

Prêt-à-Porter (1994); *Short Cuts* (1993); *The Player* (1992); *O. C. and Stiggs* (1985); *Secret Honor* (1984); *Streamers* (1983); *Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean* (1982); *Health* (1980); *A Perfect Couple* (1979); *Quintet* (1979); *A Wedding* (1978); *3 Women* (1977); *Buffalo Bill and the Indians, or Sitting Bull's History Lesson* (1976); *Nashville* (1975); *California Split* (1974); *Thieves Like Us* (1974); *The Long Goodbye* (1973); *Images* (1972); *McCabe and Mrs. Miller* (1971); *Brewster McCloud* (1970); *MASH* (1970); *Countdown* (1968)

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—Robert Cowgill

ARZNER, DOROTHY. Dorothy Arzner was one of the few female directors ever to achieve prominence in American moviemaking, even earning notice as one of the “Top Ten” directors of the 1920s. When her career ended in 1943, she had directed 17 films, including Paramount’s first talkie. Although she never came out publicly as a lesbian, she was among many Hollywood figures during its golden age whose homosexuality was an “open secret” among insiders.

Arzner was born in San Francisco January 3, in either 1897 or 1900 (sources disagree) and grew up in Los Angeles. Her father owned the Hoffman Café in Hollywood, and Arzner met many movie notables while waiting tables there. She did not immediately enter filmmaking, instead enrolling at the University of Southern California as a premed student, dropping out, and driving an ambulance during World War I. Once the war ended, she worked for a newspaper, but by 1919 she had embarked on her movie career. Arzner began as a script typist for William DeMille and was quickly promoted to editing and screenwriting; among her many credits in these capacities are *Blood and Sand* (1922, editor), *The Covered Wagon* (1923, editor and screenwriter), and *Red Kimono* (1925, screenwriter).

Her first film as director was the Paramount silent feature *Fashions for Women* (1927). She stayed with Paramount through 1932, directing three more silent films and, beginning with *The Wild Party* (1929), seven talking pictures. She is the only female director to work in both formats and is credited with inventing the boom microphone. Her last film with Paramount, *Merrily We Go to Hell* (1932), is considered among her most notable, as are most of her post-Paramount films, including *Christopher Strong* (1933), *Nana* (1934), *Craig’s Wife* (1936), *The Bride Wore Red* (1937), and *Dance, Girl, Dance* (1940). During World War II she also directed Women’s Army Corps training films, returning to the private sector for *First Comes Courage* (1943), her last film. A lengthy illness, followed by postwar social mores that required passive, domestic women, effectively ended her Hollywood career. Arzner then found a niche

offering classes at the Pasadena Playhouse and in the film department at UCLA (1959–63), as well as directing dozens of Pepsi-Cola commercials for television.

In her later years Arzner was rediscovered amid second wave feminism and lesbian activism, which generated new scholarship on the intersections between personal and public lives. Her films include stories of female bonding and often feature strong women who question or defy society's sexism. As a result, some of the most memorable actresses of the era play leads in Arzner's productions, a few in their first starring roles: Lucille Ball, Claudette Colbert, Joan Crawford, Katharine Hepburn, Merle Oberon, Maureen O'Hara, Rosalind Russell, and Sylvia Sydney. Interestingly, though she later acknowledged the "shortcomings" of the Hollywood Code of her era, Arzner asserted that "the Code at least forced women on screen to *do*."

Links between Arzner's lesbianism and the content and style of her films have been explored by feminist and queer scholars, most notably Judith Mayne. Like many of her Hollywood cohorts, Arzner was neither in nor out of the closet as understood today; her relationships, including brief affairs with Alla Nazimova and Billie Burke, were known within the industry, as was her lengthy partnership with dancer/choreographer Marion Morgan (who is credited with influencing the use of dance in Arzner's films). In the 1950s, however, the revival of strict gender codes combined with a newer and virulent homophobia to render Arzner and her films both less relevant and potentially dangerous. This context may explain her 1978 remark, "The true reason I retired from Hollywood may forever remain a secret, and I'd rather it does."

Arzner died in California the next year on October 1, 1979, having finally received some of the attention she deserved. In 1975, the Director's Guild of America, of which she was the first female member, honored her with a tribute; reportedly Katharine Hepburn's telegram was read aloud: "Isn't it wonderful that you've had such a great career, when you had no right to have a career at all." Her star was added to the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1986.

Selected Filmography

Dance, Girl, Dance (1940); *The Bride Wore Red* (1937); *The Last of Mrs. Cheyney* (1937); *Craig's Wife* (1936); *Nana* (1934); *Christopher Strong* (1933); *Merrily We Go to Hell* (1932); *Working Girls* (1931); *Honor among Lovers* (1931); *Galas de la Paramount* (1930); *Anybody's Woman* (1930); *Paramount on Parade* (1930); *Sarah and Son* (1930); *Behind the Make-Up* (1930); *The Wild Party* (1929); *Manhattan Cocktail* (1928); *Get Your Man* (1927); *Ten Modern Commandments* (1927); *Fashions for Women* (1927); *Blood and Sand* (1922)

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—Vicki L. Eaklor

ASHBY, HAL. Perhaps because there is no obvious distinctive voice unifying his work, Hal Ashby is often dismissed as a director whose greatest skill was knowing how to pick talented collaborators. A full 10 years older than fellow New Hollywood stalwarts Francis Ford Coppola, Peter Bogdanovich, and Martin Scorsese, he nevertheless grew his hair and beard long and refused to abandon his “hippie” existence, even after his younger contemporaries had embraced far more mainstream lifestyles.

Ashby was born into a Mormon family in Ogden, Utah, on September 2, 1929. His early life was disrupted by his parents divorce and his father’s suicide. Leaving Utah as a young adult—having been the one who found his father after he killed himself—Ashby made his way to California, where he took his first job in the movie industry photocopying scripts for a film studio. Learning the business from the ground up, he ultimately became a film editor. Ashby had the good fortune of working on several movies with Norman Jewison, including his 1967 film *In the Heat of the Night*. After Ashby took home the Oscar for editing on that film, Jewison encouraged him to try his hand at directing. When Jewison bowed out of making *The Landlord* (1970), Ashby stepped in and took over the project. Based on the Kristin Hunter novel about a privileged white kid who buys a building in a New York ghetto and is changed by his experiences with his black tenants, the film starred Beau Bridges in the title role. The picture yielded a supporting Oscar nomination for Lee Grant, and was well received for its honest portrayal of the awkwardness of race relations.

Ashby followed *The Landlord* with *Harold and Maude*, the picture with which he is probably most closely associated. A little gem of a film, the movie explores the unique relationship that develops between the title characters, played with quirky grace by Bud Cort and Ruth Gordon. Although it would gain a cult following years later, *Harold and Maude* was neither well received critically nor a commercial success at the time of its release. Respecting Ashby’s talent, however, Jack Nicholson suggested he consider directing *The Last Detail*. Robert Towne wrote a screenplay based on Darryl Ponicsan’s novel of the same title, with Nicholson in mind for the lead. Beset by production problems—the project was nearly cancelled when Ashby was arrested for marijuana possession in Canada—the film nevertheless proved a success, earning the Palme d’Or and the Best Actor Award for Nicholson at the 1974 Cannes Film Festival. Towne, Nicholson, and Randy Quaid were all nominated for Oscars, although none of them won. Although it never gained the following that *Harold and Maude* did, a case can be made that *The Last Detail* is Ashby’s best film, a rare offering that looks at working-class life without irony, condescension, or hand-wringing sentiment.

Ashby followed the success of *The Last Detail* with another collaborative effort with Towne. *Shampoo* (1975), Ashby’s biggest commercial success, is a satire set on the eve of Richard Nixon’s reelection (it was actually shot as the Watergate scandal unfolded). A drastic departure from the raw, hard-edged *The Last Detail*, *Shampoo* is an engaging film that explores the tangled web of sexual politics navigated by protagonist George Roundy, played with irresistible charm by co-writer Warren Beatty. *Bound for Glory* (1976), a slow-paced Woody Guthrie biopic, came next. Panned by critics and rejected by audiences, perhaps the only memorable thing about the film is that it was the first movie to use the Steadicam. Ashby’s only Oscar nomination as Best Director came

for *Coming Home* (1978), one of a number of antiwar, Vietnam epics released at the time—Michael Cimino's *The Deer Hunter* (1978) and Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* (1979) were two others. Although Ashby did not win his coveted Oscar for direction, the picture did earn awards for its screenplay and for Best Actress and Best Actor for leads Jane Fonda and Jon Voight.

By 1979, Ashby had given in to eccentricity and become reclusive and paranoid. Indulging in drugs more and more frequently, Ashby spent much of his time by himself, closed off in his Malibu beach house. Nevertheless, he was able to make *Being There*, an adaptation of a Jerzy Kosinski novel starring the extraordinarily gifted Peter Sellers as Chance, a gardener whose innocence is mistaken for wisdom by ever more powerful people.

Plagued by drug abuse and his chaotic lifestyle, Ashby's career went into decline after he made *Being There*. The Neil Simon-scripted *The Slugger's Wife* (1985), meant to be a light romantic comedy, is never light and only occasionally funny or romantic. As America turned increasingly conservative during the Reagan years, Ashby began to realize that his reputation as an eccentric was limiting his cinematic prospects. He cut his hair and trimmed his beard, and reportedly gave up drugs. Even so, there was little work available for him, apart from a pilot for the *Hill Street Blues* spin-off *Beverly Hills Buntz* (1987) and a sword-and-sorcery project with Monty Python's Graham Chapman, which was never completed. Only 59 years old, Ashby died at his Malibu home of pancreatic cancer on December 27, 1988.

Selected Filmography

8 Million Ways to Die (1986); *The Slugger's Wife* (1985); *Let's Spend the Night Together* (1983); *Lookin' to Get Out* (1982); *Second-Hand Hearts* (1981); *Being There* (1979); *Coming Home* (1978); *Bound for Glory* (1976); *Shampoo* (1975); *The Last Detail* (1973); *Harold and Maude* (1971); *The Landlord* (1970)

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—Bill Kte'pi

ASTAIRE, FRED. Fred Astaire, the debonair singing and dancing star of dozens of twentieth-century film musicals, is known worldwide as one of Hollywood's most respected and best-liked performers. Always well-mannered, and modest in his view of himself, Astaire managed to avoid celebrity scandal all his life while carving out a

unique persona as a genteel yet thoroughly American figure who could casually bring high style to a popular song and, almost at a whim, spring into a dazzling dance solo or duet, captivating in its grace, athletic in its energy.

Born Frederick Austerlitz Jr. on May 10, 1899, in Omaha, Nebraska, Astaire was the second child of an Austrian immigrant, Frederick Austerlitz, and his American wife, Joanna Gelius. His older sister, Adele, demonstrated dance and performance abilities at an early age, and Astaire's mother bundled Fred and Adele off to New York when the boy was four-and-a-half years old in order to find a place for them on the vaudeville stage. In his autobiography, *Steps in Time*, Astaire indicates that this sudden change in his life was not unwelcome—it represented the possibility for adventure, as he and his sister worked the prestigious Orpheum vaudeville circuit for a time, and then began to ascend the show business ladder



One of America's favorite entertainers, Fred Astaire danced with a winning, effortless style that drew life from ingenious combinations of tap, ballroom, and ballet dancing. (Library of Congress)

by making musicals in London and New York. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, they performed in shows written by some of the best composers of the day—George Gershwin, Cole Porter, and the team of Howard Dietz and Arthur Schwartz.

By 1933, Adele Astaire had retired and Fred moved on to Hollywood, where he had been offered a small role playing himself in an MGM musical, *Dancing Lady*. RKO Studios eventually offered him fifth billing in *Flying Down to Rio*, in which he would be teamed for the first time with Ginger Rogers. Cast as a couple, Rogers and Astaire stole the show from the three performers whose names appeared above theirs on the marquee—Dolores Del Rio, Gene Raymond, and Raul Roulien. It was the pair's mesmerizing dance routine of the tango-like "Carioca" that caught the public's eye, something that did not go unnoticed by the studio heads at RKO, which made Rogers and Astaire headliners in their next film. Appearing together in a number of subsequent films, the pair became a top 10 box-office draw for several years in the mid-1930s.

The black-and-white pictures Astaire made with Rogers for RKO ultimately came to define him. Most of these films were directed by Mark Sandrich, with Hermes Pan assisting Astaire in choreographing the dance numbers, Pandro S. Berman producing, and Carroll Clark providing the art direction (within a visual mode originated by Van Nest Polglase). Fairy-tale sets with glossy dance floors and lots of formal wear, especially for the men, characterized these confections.

The Gay Divorcee was the first, and one of the two best, of the six quintessential Astaire-Rogers RKO productions. Rogers was never lovelier than she was when she played Mimi Glossop in this film. Mimi is a reluctant partner to Astaire's Guy Holden, who woos her with his dazzling dance moves. In the film's signature dance sequence, set to Cole Porter's languorous "Night and Day," Holden, in white tie and tails, seduces the shy Mimi, drawing her into an elegant dance floor courtship, the two in perfect romantic harmony.

In the 1940s and '50s, after the Astaire-Rogers team had split, Astaire appeared in several spectacular color film musicals (mostly for MGM), including *Easter Parade*, *Royal Wedding*, *The Band Wagon*, *Daddy Long Legs*, *Funny Face*, and *Silk Stockings*. In these pictures, he was paired with a new generation of dance and film partners, including Judy Garland, Jane Powell, Leslie Caron, and Cyd Charisse.

Noted as a couples dancer, Astaire was often unfavorably compared to Gene Kelly as a solo performer; although in individual sequences such as his Bojangles dance in *Swing Time*, he nevertheless delighted audiences. Although clearly an incredibly gifted dancer, whether performing with a partner or by himself, it may be that Astaire is, indeed, best remembered in top hat and tails, gliding across the dance floor with Rogers in his early RKO musicals.

Astaire was married to Phyllis Livingston Potter for 21 years before her death in 1954; and to Robyn Smith from 1980 until his death on June 22, 1987, in Los Angeles.

See also: Musical, The; Romantic Comedy, The

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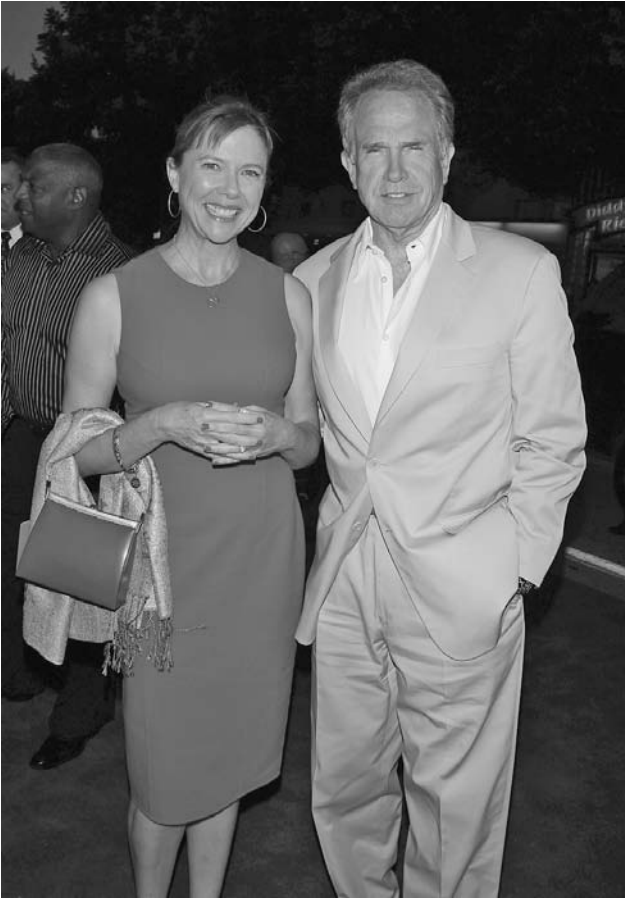
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—James Delmont

BEATTY, WARREN. In 1967, Warren Beatty starred in and produced Arthur Penn's controversial *Bonnie and Clyde*. The film elicited significant critical debate, pitting traditional critics such as Bosley Crowther against hip, liberal provocateurs such as Pauline Kael. Most importantly, perhaps, the film had far-reaching effects on the Hollywood film industry, supercharging Beatty's career, bringing forward a brace of new talent (Faye Dunaway, Gene Hackman, David Newman, Robert Benton, and others), and inaugurating a profoundly important phase of countercultural American filmmaking at the end of the 1960s.

Interestingly, although Beatty during the late 1960s was emblematic of a new type of Hollywood filmmaking, he also remained wedded to the traditions of the earlier studio system era. Indeed, although he is identified as one of the figures in Hollywood that facilitated the decline of the studio system, it is important to note that Beatty actually provided a bridge between Hollywood's past and its late twentieth-century present. Handsome, hip, and provocative, Beatty embodied the matinee idol ideal of Hollywood's golden era; as a producer, he created affectionate remakes of classic films—*Heaven Can Wait* (1978) and *Love Affair* (1994), for example; and as a director, he provided audiences with pictures that seemed to be homages to cinematic icons—*Bulworth* (1998), for instance, has a Frank Capra-like man-against-corrupt-society feel, while *Reds* (1981) bears the unmistakable mark of David Lean's sweeping period epics. Beatty, then, comes into focus as an intermediate figure straddling old and new Hollywood.

Born Henry Warren Beatty, in Virginia on March 30, 1937, he began to study acting in New York at age 20; his sister, Shirley MacLaine, was already a successful Hollywood actor at this point. Highly regarded roles in television and local theatre led Beatty onto the Broadway stage. He won approving notices for his 1959 debut in William Inge's *A Loss of Roses*, and immediately turned his sights toward movie roles. Elia Kazan's *Splendor in the Grass* (1961) launched Beatty's Hollywood career and brought the young actor almost instant stardom. Playing opposite Natalie Wood, and working from a script penned by Inge, Beatty was called upon to convey to viewers a sense of tormented masculinity; film critics and audiences alike found his performance incredibly



Warren Beatty (right, shown here with his wife, actress Annette Bening) is a popular actor and filmmaker. He began his career as a leading man but has expanded his talents to include producing, writing, and directing. Beatty produced, directed, and starred in the 1981 film *Reds* and won the Academy Award for Best Director. (Getty Images)

moving, and Beatty began to be compared to actors like Marlon Brando and other screen rebels of the 1950s.

Wary of typecasting, Beatty sought to diversify. He was improbably but ingeniously cast as an Italian libertine in *The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone* (1962), adapted from the only novel by Tennessee Williams. He was even willing to take roles that did not elicit viewer empathy, consciously choosing to play characters that tended to be both apathetic (*All Fall Down*, 1962) and opaque (*Lilith*, 1964). These films, along with Arthur Penn's *Mickey One* (1965), showcased Beatty's steadily expanding screen repertoire. A brief hiatus in Britain yielded two uninspired pictures, *Promise Her Anything* (1965) and *Kaleidoscope* (1966); although he demonstrated a deft comedic touch and deepening screen persona in these films, neither was praised. Against these prosaic comedies, the adventurous *Bonnie and Clyde* stood out in startling relief.

During this period Beatty's screen persona coalesced, and it found an ideal context in the 1970s New Hollywood. Blending

character flaws with the Hollywood hero's optimism, the Beatty protagonist proved able to support the sort of pessimistic and revisionist storytelling being imported from European art-house cinema. In Robert Altman's *McCabe and Mrs. Miller* (1971), for instance, Beatty's frontier hero fosters romantic ideals, but his aspirations are dashed thanks to the character's fatal hubris. With its hesitant and ineffectual protagonist, the film constitutes a piercing rebuttal not only of the myths of American ideology and identity, but of the classic Hollywood westerns that promoted and propagated them. *McCabe and Mrs. Miller* also cemented Beatty's taste for entrepreneurial characters blighted by personal failure or external aggressors. Sometimes the Beatty protagonist is motivated by wholly material concerns (*Dollars/\$*, a.k.a. *The Heist*, 1971), but often he harbors more exalted

aspirations, as in *McCabe and Mrs. Miller* and *Bonnie and Clyde*. Recurrently, the character's psychological flaws accelerate his failure or death. This doomed element of Beatty's persona meshed with the downbeat denouements of New Hollywood pictures, and later films such as *Bugsy* (1991) and *Bulworth* would extend the trope into the age of the blockbuster. For some critics, the bleak climatic sequences of the latter films supplied evidence of Beatty's vanity and narcissism; for others, it revealed the poignancy of curtailed enterprise, delivering affecting stabs of pathos.

By the 1970s, Beatty was becoming increasingly well known not only as an actor/director, but also as a ladies' man and political activist. Significantly, his offscreen pursuits informed his cinematic projects. Agitated by the assassinations of John and Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, he embraced subject matter that seemed overtly political. *The Parallax View* (1974), for example, presents a formally spare depiction of political conspiracy and cover-up; shot in the wake of Beatty's Democratic fundraisers for George McGovern, the film's shadowy intrigue offers an apocalyptic view of Nixonian America. Hal Ashby's *Shampoo* (1975) went even further, wedding the erotic to the political by framing Beatty's hypersexualized, anticonformist lead character within the boundaries of the 1968 presidential campaign, which saw the election of Richard Nixon and the first glimpse of the moral-majority America that would emerge in earnest during the Reagan-era 1980s.

Unadorned by political pretensions, *The Fortune* (1975) and *Heaven Can Wait* are apt to look frivolous compared to *Shampoo*, but both films are consistent with Hollywood's growing optimism from 1975 onward. The movies aptly demonstrated Beatty's comedic skills—in *The Fortune* he utilizes darting glances, knitted brows, and clipped speech to create a staid counterpoint to Jack Nicholson's zany swindler, while in the wistful love story *Heaven Can Wait*, he adopted a gentler comedic tone playing opposite his then real-life companion Julie Christie. The latter film in particular generated huge revenues (\$80 million worldwide), and at this point Beatty seized greater artistic control of his projects, turning to screenwriting and directing, and assuming the role of producer for the first time since *Bonnie and Clyde*.

Although during the 1980s Beatty's output dwindled, it was during this time that he made one of his most important, ambitious, and highly regarded films, *Reds*, which earned him the Best Director Oscar. A biopic of American John Reed, the film managed to fuse a sweeping historical examination of the masses caught up in the Russian Revolution with intimate portrayals of individuals caught up in the drama of the moment. Unlike Beatty's 1970s films, *Reds* seemed wholly incongruous with its industrial and cultural context. Institutionally, its historical subject matter flouted a current trend for conservative filmmaking based on spectacle. Politically, its sympathetic approach to the Russian Revolution contradicted an ethos of Reaganite capitalism. Clearly an instance of "personal filmmaking," *Reds* is considered by many critics Beatty's major cinematic achievement. Beatty's star dimmed a bit in the late 1980s when he—along with Dustin Hoffman—made the ill-advised decision to participate in Elaine May's disastrous project *Ishtar* (1987), an innocuous comedy with a bloated budget (\$40 million) that proved not only a critical disappointment but a complete box-office failure.

As the 1990s opened, Beatty made one of his most provocative pictures, *Dick Tracy* (1990), a triumph of special effects characterized by a splashy comic-strip aesthetic. Steeped in noir iconography, the picture revived classic filmmaking techniques and was heralded as a nostalgic paean to both 1930s Hollywood and Chester Gould's original comic strip. Having become involved with Madonna—who co-starred with him in *Dick Tracy*—Beatty appeared in her filmic memoir, *Madonna: Truth or Dare* (1991), which chronicled the singer's experiences during her notorious "Blond Ambition" tour. Offering up fawning observations about his former lover, Beatty seemed less the self-assured ladies' man and more the awkward adolescent with a school-boy crush on the iconic rock star. Interestingly, the same year that *Madonna: Truth or Dare* was released, Beatty would go on to star in and produce the Barry Levinson gangster biopic *Bugsy* (1991); while making the picture, the long-time bachelor fell in love with his co-star Annette Bening, and they eventually married.

Beatty and Bening would co-star in the less-than-inspired *Love Affair* (1994)—Katharine Hepburn's final screen appearance—before Beatty made the intriguing political satire *Bulworth* in 1998. Increasingly, though, critics began to characterize Beatty as a film industry figure flirting with absence—not only because he made fewer and fewer films, but because to some he seemed almost to be a spectral, remote figure on screen. Significantly, the notorious micro-manager turned over control of the much maligned *Town & Country* (2001) to director Peter Chelsom; and as the early 2000s unfolded, it seemed that Beatty—his cinematic legacy long since assured—favoured familial domesticity over moviemaking, as he limited public appearances to political events and career retrospectives.

Selected Filmography

Town & Country (2001); *Bulworth* (1998); *Love Affair* (1994); *Bugsy* (1991); *Dick Tracy* (1990); *Ishtar* (1987); *Reds* (1981); *Heaven Can Wait* (1978); *The Fortune* (1975); *Shampoo* (1975); *The Parallax View* (1974); *\$* (1971); *McCabe and Mrs. Miller* (1971); *The Only Game in Town* (1970); *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967); *Kaleidoscope* (1966); *Promise Her Anything* (1965); *Mickey One* (1965); *Lilith* (1964); *All Fall Down* (1962); *The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone* (1961); *Splendor in the Grass* (1961)

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—Gary Bettinson

BERGMAN, INGRID. Ingrid Bergman was born in Stockholm, Sweden, on August 29, 1915, to a Swedish father and German mother. Losing both of her parents at an early age, she went to stay with an aunt and uncle. At the age of 18, Bergman was accepted at the Royal Dramatic Theatre School in Stockholm, where she studied acting and made her stage debut. Her first film role came in Gustaf Molander's *Munkbrogröven* in 1935. A year later she starred in Molander's *Intermezzo*, the film that would propel her to stardom on the big screen. *Intermezzo* caught the attention of Hollywood producer David O. Selznick, who bought the rights to remake the film in English, with Bergman in mind for the lead role. The Hollywood version (1939) of the film was such a success that Selznick signed Bergman to a seven-year contract. Bergman, however, made only two films with Selznick, partly because he took a break from making films, and partly because Bergman was loaned out to other studios by Selznick. She played a variety of roles during this early period in her career, including a Victorian barmaid in MGM's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1941), and the iconic Ilsa, opposite Humphrey Bogart's Rick, in Warner Bros.' *Casablanca* (1942).

Selznick persuaded Ernest Hemingway that the beautiful young actress was perfect for the female lead in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1943); her performance earned Bergman her first Best Actress Academy Award nomination. She would win the first of her three Best Actress Oscars the following year for *Gaslight* (1944), in which she portrays a naive wife driven toward insanity by her husband. *Gaslight* is one of several films in which Bergman's character suffers at the hands of her husband—others included *Notorious* (1946) and *Under Capricorn* (1949), both directed by Alfred Hitchcock, who also directed Bergman in *Spellbound* (1945). Proving her versatility as an actress, Bergman played Sister Mary Benedict in her next film, *The Bells of St. Mary's* (1945). Featuring fan-favorite Bing Crosby as Father Chuck O'Malley, the friendly rival of Sister Mary at the local parish, the picture proved to be Bergman's biggest box-office success and earned her another Academy Award nomination. In 1946, she returned to the stage, playing the lead role in *Joan of Lorraine* on Broadway. The performance earned her a Tony Award for Best Actress. In 1949, she went on to star in *Joan of Arc*, a screen adaptation of *Joan of Lorraine*. Although the film was a box-office disappointment, Bergman received another Best Actress Academy Award nomination for her performance.

Later in 1949, Bergman made the fateful decision to send Italian director Roberto Rossellini what was basically a fan letter, in which she indicated that she was very much interested in working with him. Rossellini responded by rewriting a part in his script for *Stromboli* and offering the role to Bergman (1949). While filming *Stromboli*, Bergman and Rossellini, both married, began a torrid affair. Both would seek divorces from their current spouses, although Bergman's husband agreed to their split only after she revealed to him that she was carrying Rossellini's child, a son, Roberto, who was born in 1950. Although Bergman and Rossellini ultimately married, news of the couple's affair, and of Bergman's willingness to leave not only her husband but also their daughter to be with Rossellini, cost her many of her American fans and negatively affected her Hollywood career. Bergman and Rossellini lived in Italy and made five films



Film star Ingrid Bergman reclines against the arm of a sofa, 1941. (Getty Images)

together between 1950 and 1955. In 1952, Bergman gave birth to twin girls, one of whom, Isabella, became a noted actress and model.

Bergman worked solely with Rossellini until 1956, when she made *Elena et les hommes* with Jean Renoir, a film that reignited international interest in the actress. During the same year, she was welcomed back to Hollywood, starring in the Twentieth Century-Fox production of *Anastasia*, for which she won another Best Actress Oscar. Although her Hollywood career was back on track, her relationship with Rossellini was deteriorating, and the couple divorced in 1957.

In 1959, Bergman won an Emmy for her lead role in a television production of *The Turn of the Screw*; and in 1965, she made her London theatre debut. She won her third Academy Award in 1974—a Best Supporting Actress

Oscar—for her role in *Murder on the Orient Express*. Divorced from her third husband and diagnosed with cancer in 1975, Bergman made her last film in 1978, Ingmar Bergman's *Autumn Sonata*. Her final role came in the television miniseries *A Woman Called Golda*, in which she played the part of Golda Meir. The role won Bergman an Emmy and a Golden Globe. She died in London on August 29, 1989 on her 67th birthday.

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—Victoria Williams

BERKELEY, BUSBY. Busby Berkeley William Enos was a choreographer and a director who helped revitalize the movie musical in the 1930s. Born to a theatrical family in Los Angeles on November 29, 1895, Berkeley served in the U.S. Army during World War I. He eventually made his way to New York, where he became both

an actor and a choreographer. His choreography impressed film critics and studio heads alike, and when actor Eddie Cantor went to Hollywood to star in *Whoopie* (1930), Berkeley was sent along to choreograph the film. Prior to Berkeley's work, musical numbers in movies were filmed with a stationary camera. Berkeley freed the camera so that rather than merely showing the chorus girls dance, the camera moved about them as they created various kaleidoscopic patterns that were recorded from the sides, the front, the back, and especially from above.

In 1933, Berkeley moved to Warner Bros. There, for eight years, he choreographed numbers for some of the studio's best musicals, each more sophisticated, larger, and more spectacular than the previous one. Warner Bros. had been on the verge of bankruptcy when Berkeley was asked to choreograph *42nd Street* (1933). In this film he choreographed the dance numbers using the same techniques he had employed before: the mobile camera, cutting to expand the dance space, close-ups of beautiful girls, and overhead shots. He also packed the dance numbers together at the end of the movie. The film was a success and established Berkeley as one of Hollywood's most important choreographers. That same year he choreographed *Gold Diggers of 1933*. Like *42nd Street*, this film starred Ruby Keeler and Dick Powell. It is memorable because in one number, "The Shadow Waltz," Berkeley used the new technology of neon lights.

Also in 1933, he choreographed *Footlight Parade*, which included the song "By a Waterfall." This was one of the first cinematic production numbers to be shot as a water ballet. Until he moved to MGM in 1939, Berkeley choreographed and directed 19 more films for Warner Bros. While not all were musicals—he made the crime drama *They Made Me A Criminal* in 1939, for instance—most of the pictures were. They included such visually arresting production numbers as the title song of *Dames* (1934) and "Lullaby of Broadway" in *Gold Diggers of 1935*.



A still from Busby Berkeley's *Gold Diggers of 1933*. Berkeley was famous for using his dancers to create stunning geometric patterns on-screen. (Underwood & Underwood/Corbis)

After Berkeley moved to MGM, he directed and choreographed three Mickey Rooney-Judy Garland musicals. He was also in charge of *For Me And My Gal* (1942), and in 1943 he choreographed the “I Got Rhythm” number in *Girl Crazy*. While these numbers were less ambitious than the work he had done at Warner Bros., they were still imaginative. Also in 1943, he directed and choreographed *The Gang’s All Here* for Twentieth Century-Fox. This formulaic wartime musical, starring Alice Faye and Carmen Miranda, included some of his most fantastic and creative work. For Carmen Miranda he choreographed “The Lady in the Tutti-Frutti Hat.” In the 1960s, this number, which included a 60-foot-high headpiece for Carmen Miranda, was considered the height of camp. He also choreographed the stunning “Polka Dot Polka” for Alice Faye. In the late 1940s and early ’50s, he did three films with Esther Williams. The finale of *Easy to Love* (1953), which was filmed in Florida, included Williams diving from a helicopter over 100 water-skiers. Berkeley’s last film was as the second-unit director for 1962’s *Jumbo*, in which he directed and choreographed most of the musical numbers. In 1971, Berkeley directed and choreographed Ruby Keeler in *No, No Nanette* on Broadway. This was his last professional production. He died on March 14, 1978, at the age of 80, in his home near Palm Springs, California.

Although budget constraints make it almost impossible to include the kind of elaborate song-and-dance productions favored by Berkeley in contemporary musicals, his visual sense, innovative camerawork, and creative staging continue to shape almost every musical from the 1930s forward.

Selected Filmography

Take Me Out to the Ball Game (1949); *Cinderella Jones* (1946); *The Gang’s All Here* (1943); *Cabin in the Sky* (1943); *For Me and My Gal* (1942); *Babes on Broadway* (1941); *Ziegfeld Girl* (1941); *Blonde Inspiration* (1941); *Strike Up the Band* (1940); *Forty Little Mothers* (1940); *Fast and Furious* (1939); *Babes in Arms* (1939); *They Made Me a Criminal* (1939); *Comet Over Broadway* (1938); *Garden of the Moon* (1938); *Men Are Such Fools* (1938); *Hollywood Hotel* (1937); *The Go Getter* (1937); *Stage Struck* (1936); *I Live for Love* (1935); *Bright Lights* (1935); *Gold Diggers of 1935* (1935); *Dames* (1934); *She Had to Say Yes* (1933); *42nd Street* (1933)

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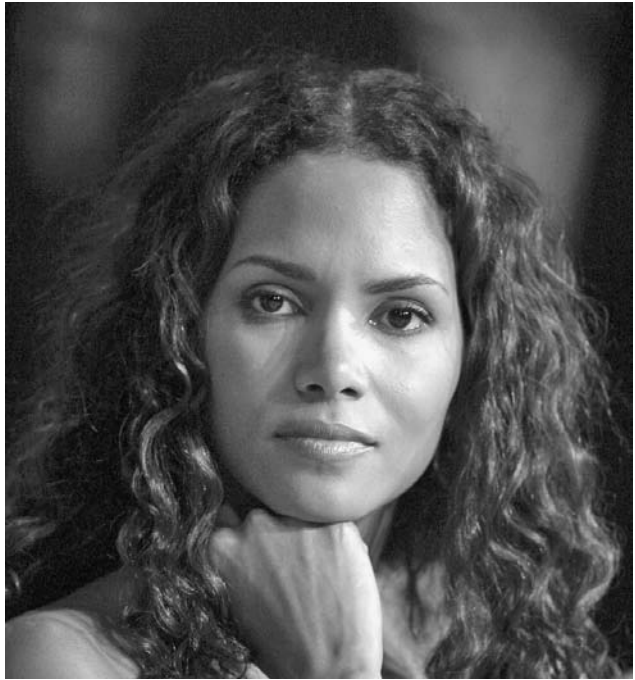
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—Scott Sheidlower

BERRY, HALLE. Halle Berry, beauty queen, spokesmodel, actress, and producer, was the first woman of color to receive the Academy Award for Best Actress. One of the highest-paid actresses in Hollywood, she is also one of the few African American performers to have received an Emmy Award, Golden Globe, and Screen Actors Guild Award (Ewey Johnson, 2008). She garnered all three of these awards for her work in the HBO biopic *Introducing Dorothy Dandridge* (1998), on which she also served as executive producer. Berry has been instrumental in breaking down barriers that have long restricted women of color from playing roles other than those as maids, servants, or prostitutes.

Born Maria Halle Berry on August 14, 1966, in Cleveland, Ohio, to Judith Ann Hawkins, a psychiatric nurse from England, and an African American man Jerome Berry, who worked as a hospital attendant, she changed her name legally to Halle Berry in 1971. Her parents divorced when she was four; she has an older sister, Heide, from whom she is estranged. She graduated from Bedford High School and attended Cuyahoga Community College. Berry began entering beauty contests in the 1980s. She won the “Miss Teen All American” pageant in 1985, and a year later, the “Miss Ohio USA” pageant. She was a “Miss USA” runner-up, and subsequently the first African American entrant in the “Miss World” contest. Deciding to try her hand at acting, she secured a role in the spin-off series *Living Dolls* in 1989, playing the character of Emily Franklin; she followed this with a regular role on the popular television series *Knots Landing*. Appearing in music videos and a significant number of films during the 1990s, she won several important awards for her performances.

In 1991, Berry appeared in what many consider her break-out role in Spike Lee’s *Jungle Fever*, which starred Wesley Snipes and Annabella Sciorra. She went on to co-star in the film *Strictly Business* (1991). This was followed by appearances in *The Last Boy Scout*, with Bruce Willis (1991) and *Boomerang* (1992), which starred Eddie Murphy, Martin Lawrence, and Chris Rock. Berry also continued her work in television,



Actress Halle Berry poses during a press conference for the film *X-Men: The Last Stand*, at the 59th International Film Festival in Cannes in 2006. Berry became the first African American woman to win the Academy Award for Best Actress, for her performance in *Monster’s Ball*, 2001. (AP/Wide World Photos)

starring in the ABC miniseries *Queen: The Story of an American Family* (1992)—adapted from an Alex Haley book—for which she won an NAACP Image Award. In 1994, Berry played the role of the seductive secretary Sharon Stone in the movie *The Flintstones*. A more serious role came in *Losing Isaiah* (1995), in which she played a recovering drug addict attempting to regain custody of her son. Berry became a spokes-model for Revlon in 1996, and later secured contracts with Versace and Cody Inc. She received critical acclaim for her role in the political satire *Bulworth* (1998), starring opposite Warren Beatty. In 1999, Berry took the role of Dorothy Dandridge in HBO's critically acclaimed biography of the performer. Ironically, the real Dorothy Dandridge was the first African American woman to be nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actress. Berry would go on to win that award in 2001, for her role in *Monster's Ball* opposite Billy Bob Thornton (Mapp, 2008).

Berry starred in several blockbusters after receiving the Academy Award, including the *X-Men* trilogy (2000–2006), *Die Another Day* (2002), and *Catwoman* (2004); she received \$12.5 million for the latter picture, an enormous sum for a female actor. In 2005, Berry returned to television, starring in the Oprah Winfrey adaptation of the Zora Neale Hurston novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Berry continues to be one of the hardest-working actors in America.

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—Hettie Williams

BIGELOW, KATHRYN. Of the more than two dozen women who have both written and directed films in the United States over the past three decades, Kathryn Bigelow (born November 27, 1951) has enjoyed a greater measure of critical esteem than many of her contemporaries, though only occasionally an equal measure of box-office success. She has been praised repeatedly—and somewhat ironically—as the most “masculine” of feminine directors working today, chiefly because she continues to display a fascination for action narratives and for characters caught up in violent conflict. Seldom will any reviewer of her films abstain from the use of phrases like “testosterone-charged” and “adrenalin rush” to describe the energy and momentum of the human drama that is indeed central to all of her work, and the implied subtext of such commentary would seem to be that Bigelow has somehow intruded on an otherwise masculine domain once exclusively dominated by a Don Siegel or a Sam Peckinpah.

Curiously, for an action-oriented, high-intensity filmmaker, Bigelow's creative roots lie in the more cerebral forms of painting known as conceptual art, and she continues to think of her work in largely visual terms. Her decision to shift the focus of her art



Academy Award-winning film director Kathryn Bigelow speaks during the 2010 Ernst & Young Strategic Growth Forum in Palm Springs, California, on Saturday, November 13, 2010. Bigelow won an Oscar for Best Director for her film *The Hurt Locker*, which won a total of six Academy Awards, including Best Picture, in 2008. (Bloomberg/Getty Images)

work from painting to cinema—signaled by her move from the Art Institute of San Francisco to the Film Program at Columbia University—was inspired by the belief that filmmaking would allow her to communicate a greater range of expressive possibilities. Her subsequent determination, however, not to enter the industry “ghetto” reserved for novice women directors, making the kind of movies commonly known as “chick flicks,” reflects a consistent desire for independence from the studio system and its assumptions about culture and gender, assumptions she has challenged consistently throughout her career.

Bigelow’s earliest films are thus both deliberately imitative and just as deliberately transgressive, taking up a familiar genre and then proceeding to twist it out of shape. Her debut film, *The Loveless* (1982), co-directed with Monty Montgomery, is a stylized homage to *The Wild One* (1954) with Willem Dafoe cast in the Marlon Brando role of a moody, impulsively violent leader of a motorcycle gang going “nowhere.” Unfortunately, Bigelow’s narrative focus constantly shifts away from the impending conflict between unruly outsiders and redneck townsfolk toward the interior conflicts of her biker protagonist, leaving her audience uncertain as to whether she has any story to tell.

Her next venture in genre exploitation/experimentation—a far more successful one, both artistically and commercially—is a fusion of two otherwise unrelated film types: the horror movie and the western. *Near Dark* (1987) follows the gruesome adventures of a family of gypsy vampires, whose violent assaults on an assortment of victims are filmed with an unsettling mixture of humor and film noir dread, and once again

Bigelow seems far more interested in the interpersonal dynamic of this “family” than in accounting for their past or present existence. By taking her nightmare characters out of Transylvania and placing them on the dusty plains of Oklahoma, Bigelow renders the traditional horror tale almost mundane, a tendency that becomes even more marked when the unwitting cowboy protagonist of the film (played by Adrian Pasdar) falls in love with a bloodsucking (but otherwise sweet and affectionate) young blonde (Jenny Wright), shifting the center of this drama away from murder-and-vampire mayhem toward romance and redemption. Curing vampires of their homicidal addiction through blood transfusions risks a descent into comic banality, but Bigelow’s determination to bring her cowboy-meets-girl vampire story to a happy ending overrides whatever the conventions of either genre seem to demand.

Bigelow’s next experiment in genre-busting is the far more successful *Blue Steel* (1989), which takes the demands of the cop-thriller far more seriously than the aesthetic of the B-horror flick, and as a result she is able to center her film on a complex and conflicted heroine. Jamie Lee Curtis’s Megan Turner—a novice cop who must simultaneously defend her own life and rescue New York City from a psychopathic serial-killer (who is also a would-be suitor)—is obliged to play two iconic yet incompatible roles: a castrating urban combatant whose revolver becomes a fetishized object of seduction and destruction, and a daughter-lover whose ambivalence toward the men in her life draws her in several contradictory directions at once. Megan’s humiliation of her abusive father, her refusal to be either dehumanized or defeminized by the patriarchal police culture she is a part of, and her steely determination to destroy a virtually demonic predator/lover (played with maniacal charm by Ron Silver), who seemingly cannot be killed by ordinary bullets, all raise her to an almost mythic level of feminist counter-aggression. Yet Curtis’s performance intimates both fragility and emotional longing, qualities one would never associate with a stereotyped woman warrior.

Bigelow’s next film, *Point Break* (1991), attempts a similar transformation of all-too-familiar action figures into conflicted antiheroes, engaged in an existential test of wills and self-knowledge. Her antagonists this time are a callow FBI agent, Johnny Utah (played with characteristic inexpressiveness by Keanu Reeves), and a surfer-bank-robber-guru named Bodhi—short for *bodhisattva*—played by the late Patrick Swayze in what would become one of his signature roles. That *Point Break* has achieved the status of a cult favorite among Bigelow’s admirers should surprise no one: it contains precisely those oppositional themes and subversive ironies that practically all of her films exhibit, only presented here with even greater energy and panache. Her surfer-bank robbers are thus not an ordinary band of thieves but a family of outsiders, dedicated to ridiculing “the system.” Disguising themselves as ex-presidents Reagan, Carter, and Nixon, they begin to take on some of the satiric personae these masks connote, culminating in a scene where, in the midst of a bank heist, the “Nixon” robber holds his hands aloft and shouts “I am not a thief.” That they are destroyed by an almost adolescent belief in their invincibility rather than by the intelligence and fortitude of the government agents who are hot on their path tells us a great deal about just how ambivalently Bigelow views her criminal protagonists, and a similar inversion of moral perspective occurs when Reeves’s boyishly naive hero finally realizes his secret

sharer connection to the gang's leader, throwing away his badge and his career in a gesture made famous by Gary Cooper's Marshal Will Kane in *High Noon*.

Bigelow's 1995 sci-fi extravaganza *Strange Days*—written and produced by her ex-husband, James Cameron—failed to attract the audiences that flocked to *Point Break*, in spite of its more ambitious visual style and apocalyptic subject. Set years before the actual fin-de-siècle, the film invokes the specter of the Last Days, with Los Angeles on the eve of the new millennium as the battleground on which the armies of the night will clash, and “civilization as we know it” will move closer to the abyss. Her shambling weakling of a protagonist, Lenny Nero—played with a persistent whine by Ralph Fiennes—moves about in a surreal cyber world of bootleg porno and snuff CDs that tap directly into the cerebral cortex, enabling the user to re-experience the most violent (usually erotic) acts with unbearable intensity. Part *Blade Runner*, part *Day of the Locust*, Bigelow's nightmare future is an obviously derivative dystopia, complete with imminent race wars and pervasive police corruption, and with only a determined African American heroine (played with equal tenderness and ferocity by Angela Bassett) to save the day. Movie critics were largely unimpressed by both the visual razzle-dazzle and the forced romantic denouement of this film, and *Strange Days* was seen by many as an ambitious but expensive flop.

Bigelow's next two films represent a departure from the world of subversive mayhem and existential irony that have marked her work up to this point. *The Weight of Water* (2000), based on a novel of the same title by Anita Shreve, juxtaposes the tortured lives and psyches of two different families, separated by a century but brought together by a dynamic of sexual longing and moral confusion, coupled with betrayal by the men in their lives. Bigelow clearly wants the viewer to see these two family melodramas as reflecting images, one of the other, but the parallel stories never entirely intertwine, and the violent acts that punctuate the lives of both never really move us toward insight or even empathy. *K-11: The Widow-Maker* (2002) is a far more conventional Cold War action-thriller, with practically every movie cliché of submarine warfare dusted off for use in this predictable exercise in testosterone-driven personality conflicts in a very small space. Not even the talents of Liam Neeson and Harrison Ford, as two rival captains of an endangered Russian sub, can rescue this film from ultimate banality.

Bigelow's most recent film, *The Hurt Locker* (2009), has rescued a career that seemed to be moving irresistibly toward the margins of contemporary filmmaking, with a remarkably candid, largely cinéma vérité representation of the face of war in Iraq, and of the inner lives of the men who have fought that war. Her central figure, Sergeant James (superbly underplayed by Jeremy Renner), heads a bomb-disposal squad, and his task is to defuse the omnipresent IEDs without blowing up his comrades or himself in the process. What we (and Renner's character) soon discover is that he enjoys his work—the danger and the resultant adrenalin rush—far more than anything else in his life. Bigelow's observation that “War's dirty little secret is that some men love it” is convincingly borne out when we view her otherwise fearless warrior baffled and distressed while shopping for breakfast cereals in a supermarket, and her protagonist's return to the front follows with a kind of tragic inevitability once we have viewed his extreme discomfort with civilian life. In *The Hurt Locker* Bigelow finally

appears to have found an action vehicle that can bear the weight of moral reflection without collapsing under it. This view was obviously shared by members of the Motion Picture Academy, which voted Bigelow Best Director of 2009—the first woman to have received this award in the Academy’s history—and also awarded *The Hurt Locker* an Oscar for Best Picture.

Selected Filmography

The Hurt Locker (2008); *K-19: The Widowmaker* (2002); *The Weight of Water* (2000); *Strange Days* (1995); *Point Break* (1991); *Near Dark* (1987); *The Loveless* (1982); *The Set-Up* (1978)

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—Robert Platzner

BOGDANOVICH, PETER. Peter Bogdanovich, born on July 30, 1939, in Kingston, New York, is unique in the history of cinema. He is a film critic, film historian, screenwriter, composer, producer, author, actor, and director. As a young boy in New York, he was exposed by his father, a Serbian artist, to the wonder of silent and talking movies. Two films in particular remained in Bogdanovich’s psyche, Howard Hawks’s *Red River* (1948) and John Ford’s *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* (1949). Bogdanovich’s passion for film was firmly in place, and he estimates that between the ages of 12 and 30 he saw over 4,000 movies.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Bogdanovich wrote film criticism for various publications, beginning with *Film Culture*, *Film Quarterly*, and *Movie*, and eventually went on to popular national publications such as *Esquire*, *Vogue*, and the *Saturday Evening Post*. He produced a series of monographs for the Museum of Modern Art on directors Howard Hawks, Alfred Hitchcock, and Orson Welles, and wrote books on Allan Dwan and Fritz Lang. His first directing experience was in 1959, when he helmed the Off-Broadway theatre production of Clifford Odets’s *The Big Knife*.

By the mid-1960s, Bogdanovich had caught the Hollywood bug and started working with producer/director Roger Corman. He worked as assistant director and screenwriter on Corman’s *The Wild Angels* (1966), a low-budget biker flick, and credits Corman with teaching him how to plan and make movies on a small budget. He then worked on the less satisfying exploitation picture *Voyage to the Planet of the Prehistoric Woman* (1968); and the same year, he acted in and directed his first feature, the thriller *Targets* (1968), which featured the legendary Boris Karloff in an award-worthy

performance. The film, based loosely on the Charles Whitman murders, was shelved by Universal for a brief period because there was some controversy surrounding it. Apparently, the assassin in *Targets* drove the same car and had the same kind of gun as the person who killed Martin Luther King Jr. Some of the crew who worked on *Targets* went on to work on the counter culture classic *Easy Rider* (1969). Bogdanovich also made the documentary *Directed by John Ford* (1971).

Bogdanovich struck pay dirt with his next film, *The Last Picture Show* (1971), which was based on the novel by Larry McMurtry. Shot in black and white and featuring a then 20-year-old Cybill Shepherd, the movie garnered critical praise; some even argued that it was the best film since *Citizen Kane* (1941). The picture was nominated for eight Oscars, including Best Director, and won two: Best Supporting Actor (Ben Johnson) and Best Supporting Actress (Cloris Leachman). Bogdanovich was involved in a highly publicized

affair with Shepherd and left his wife, Polly Platt, and two children. He continued his winning streak with the Barbra Streisand comedy *What's Up, Doc?* (1972) and the caper film *The Paper Chase* (1973). At this point, it was thought that he could do no wrong in Hollywood, but *Daisy Miller* (1974), the musical *At Long Last Love* (1976), and *Nickelodeon* (1976), while well received critically, were commercial failures.

By 1978, Bogdanovich's affair with Shepherd had cooled, and in 1979 he worked again with Roger Corman on the Ben Gazzara picture *Saint Jack*. He fell in love with the 20-year-old *Playboy* Playmate Dorothy Stratton, who had a small role in 1980's *They All Laughed*. In a jealous rage, Stratton's husband shot her and then shot himself. Bogdanovich, who was crushed, wrote an account of the relationship and murder in *The Killing of the Unicorn* (1984). In the book, there are some strong allegations made against *Playboy* founder Hugh Hefner, which started a well-publicized feud between



Director Peter Bogdanovich attends the TCM Classic Film Festival screening of a *A Star Is Born* at Grauman's Chinese Theater on April 22, 2010, in Hollywood. (Getty Images)

Bogdanovich and Hefner. Bogdanovich distributed *They All Laughed* himself and lost several million dollars, despite the fact that the film starred Audrey Hepburn. He then directed the award-winning and critically acclaimed *Mask* (1985), about a young, disfigured boy, which featured singer Cher in the role of the mother. He sued Universal Studios for cutting some footage he deemed important and for replacing songs by Bruce Springsteen, which were originally in the soundtrack. Bogdanovich's next film, *Illegally Yours* (1988), went straight to video. Also, in 1988, he married Dorothy Stratton's younger sister, who was just 20 years old, which led to a minor scandal; they divorced in 2001.

Twenty years after *The Last Picture Show*, Bogdanovich revisited its characters in *Texasville* (1990), which featured a return of the original *Picture Show* cast. In 1991, George Hickenlooper made a documentary, *Picture This: The Times of Peter Bogdanovich in Archer City, Texas*, about the experience of making these two movies.

Throughout the 1990s, Bogdanovich continued to write and publish, and he began to expand into the world of television, directing episodes of the revamped drama *Naked City* and the *Fallen Angels* series. He appeared as a therapist in the highly popular HBO gangster drama *The Sopranos*, and in the Truman Capote biopic *Infamous* (1986). During the early 2000s, he directed *The Cat's Meow* (2001), *Mystery of Natalie Wood* (2004), and *Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers: Running Down the Dream* (2007).

Now in his seventies, Bogdanovich is busier than ever. He is a highly sought after guest for documentaries on DVD releases of the films of directors like Hitchcock and Ford, and he often does commentaries for classic Hollywood films, such as *Bringing Up Baby* (1938). Bogdanovich has often lamented that movies today are all special effects and hype, and show little concern for story. Throughout his career, the one thing that has been foremost in his mind was to make movies that told stories, had substance, but were still entertaining.

Selected Filmography

The Cat's Meow (2001); *The Thing Called Love* (1993); *Noises Off...* (1992); *Texasville* (1990); *Illegally Yours* (1988); *Mask* (1985); *They All Laughed* (1981); *Saint Jack* (1979); *Nickelodeon* (1976); *At Long Last Love* (1975); *Daisy Miller* (1974); *Paper Moon* (1973); *What's Up, Doc?* (1972); *Directed by John Ford* (1971); *The Last Picture Show* (1971); *Targets* (1968); *Voyage to the Planet of Prehistoric Women* (1968)

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—Robert G. Weiner

BORDEN, LIZZIE. Lizzie Borden is a feminist filmmaker, artist, and critic who has taken directing to new levels. She has confronted some of the most controversial issues of her time, including sexuality, prostitution, pornography, voyeurism, and women's equality.

Linda Elizabeth Borden was born in Detroit, on February 3, 1954, though some sources list 1950 as her actual date of birth. To the chagrin of her parents, she adopted, and later capitalized on the nickname Lizzie. (The original Lizzie Borden [1860–1927] was tried but acquitted of murdering her parents in Fall River, Massachusetts.) She studied art at Wayne State University, eventually transferring to Wellesley College in Massachusetts, where she completed her BFA in 1973. She then attended Queen's College in New York, where she completed her MFA. A gifted writer, in 1975 she published *Artists' Performance*, a book she coauthored with Susan Brockman. She also began critiquing art in the journal *Artforum* at this time.

Self-taught in film production, Borden made *Regrouping* in 1976, an 80-minute, black-and-white offering in which she explored the idea that women could achieve a sense of solidarity if they were willing to unite toward a common cause, even if they were confronting different issues. She followed *Regrouping* with *Born in Flames* (1983). Set in New York City on the 10th anniversary of a fictitious socialist revolution, the film presents audiences with a dystopic society wherein the government has supposedly taken progressive steps to deal with issues of class, race, gender, and sexual orientation, but where people still suffer from political, economic, and labor abuses. Hard-edged and marked by what was extremely raw language for the time, Borden edited the film's short vignettes together in a fragmented, nonlinear fashion, a process that radically altered the normative viewing experiences of audiences.

In *Working Girls* (1986), the first film in which she used professional actors, Borden examined middle-class prostitution in a documentary fashion. Attempting to dero-manticize the process, Borden portrayed prostitution as nothing more than a business, one in which working girls make appointments, keep logs detailing the proclivities of their clients, insure that they are protected by using the proper contraceptives, and sometimes even commute to work on bicycles (Crowdus, 2002). Confronting fantasies about prostitution from the perspectives of both men and women, *Working Girls* also explores capitalism and the employer-employee relationship—especially that between prostitutes and their madams.

An unsettling thriller, *Love Crimes* (1991, 1992—two versions were released) was Borden's first studio film. In the manner of *Sex, Lies, and Videotape*, Steven Soderbergh's 1989 film, Borden explores the disturbing dynamics of voyeurism, desire, control, and degradation. The film follows a hard-driving female district attorney, Dana Greenway (Sean Young), who ignores authority and sets her own rules. She becomes intrigued by the case of a handsome, predatory man, David Hanover (Patrick Bergin, best known for his role as the despotic husband in *Sleeping with the Enemy* opposite Julia Roberts), who poses as a photographer in order to seduce, and abuse, women. When none of Hanover's victims will press charges against him, Greenway goes undercover in an attempt to make a case that she can use to bring the man to justice. After making contact with Hanover, and subjecting herself to his abuse, however, Greenway,

like the other women on whom Hanover has preyed, finds herself strangely attracted to her antagonist, and she must reconcile her desire to prosecute this victimizer with her desire to be controlled by him.

In 1994, Borden joined three other women directors—Clara Law, Ana Maria Magalhães, and Monika Treut—to create the anthology *Erotique*. Exploring some of the same themes she addressed in *Love Crimes*, Borden's segment, "Let's Talk About Sex," follows a young Hispanic woman, Rosie (Kamala Lopez-Dawson), who desperately wants to be an actress but continues to run up against stereotypic boundaries that keep all but the blonde-haired, blue-eyed, "pretty" girls on the outside looking in. Working as a phone sex operator in order to support herself, Rosie comes to dread listening to her callers' fantasies. Unfulfilled at every turn, she enters into an increasingly disturbing, sexually charged phone relationship with Dr. Robert Stern (Bryan Cranston), a man who is willing to listen to Rosie's fantasies.

Although Borden has continued to work in the industry, after her work on *Erotique* her production has trailed off. She directed an episode of the *Red Shoe Diaries* for television in 1996 and participated—rather eerily—in a 1995 History Channel production entitled *The Strange Case of Lizzie Borden*. Although most of her work to this point has come early in her career, Borden's talent and her willingness to involve herself in cutting-edge filmmaking have made her an important figure in American cinema.

Selected Filmography

Erotique (1994); *Love Crimes* (1992); *Inside Out* (1991); "Monsters" (1988); *Working Girls* (1986); *Born in Flames* (1983); *Regrouping* (1976)

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—Ralph Hartsock

BRANDO, MARLON. Marlon Brando was arguably the finest screen actor of the twentieth century, winning worldwide acceptance as both a movie star of the first rank and as a performer of uncommon skill. A so-called Method actor, he was a student of the Stanislavski approach to stage acting, which he learned first from his mentor, Stella Adler, and later from Elia Kazan, Lee Strasberg, and others who taught at the famous Actors Studio in Manhattan.

The son of Marlon Brando Sr. and Dorothy Julia Pennebaker, Brando was born in Omaha, Nebraska, on April 3, 1924. His mother had a hand in founding the prestigious Omaha Community Playhouse at a time when Henry Fonda appeared there; and his sister, Jocelyn, also became an actor. After an indifferent school career, Brando set out for New York City in 1943, where he began to study with Adler. It was during this time that he developed the habit of observing people—often with such intensity that he annoyed them—eventually acquiring the ability not only to imitate their mannerisms and vocalisms, but, seemingly, to embody their very essence. Expelled from secondary school for engaging in mildly insurrectionary pranks, Brando retained a streak of mischievousness and rebellion his entire life. In the end, this would serve him well, as in many of his most celebrated film roles he played rebels, criminals, or outlaws.

Early on in his career, he had to settle for small parts in stage productions, such as *I Remember Mama* and *Truckline Café*; but his casual, powerful presence ultimately caught the eye of critics and audiences alike. Despite a tendency to mumble, he brought a fresh, naturalistic style to his roles. Above all, Brando exuded sexuality. An uncommonly handsome young man, he earned a slightly tougher look when the tip of his nose was flattened in a friendly boxing match.

His unique look and style impressed director Elia Kazan and playwright Tennessee Williams, both of whom felt he was right for the part of Stanley Kowalski in the 1947 Broadway production of *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Wearing skin-tight jeans and torn T-shirts, Brando, giving expression to a powerful sense of working-class angst, wowed audiences and stole the show from veteran actress Jessica Tandy, who played the vulnerable, sensitive, but sexually corrupt Blanche, sister to Kowalski's wife, Stella. Brando's fresh, powerful reading of Stanley helped make the play both a sensation and a success. It also earned Brando invitations from Hollywood, which he accepted; he never returned to the stage.

After playing a disgruntled paraplegic in *The Men* in 1950, Brando reprised his role as Stanley Kowalski in Kazan's 1951 screen version of *Streetcar*, garnering an Oscar nomination for his performance. Kazan had a unique skill in handling Brando, and he was able to get the most out of his young star. Indeed, Brando gave one of his finest performances in Kazan's next film, *Viva Zapata* (1952), in which he played the Mexican revolutionary Emiliano Zapata. An atmosphere-soaked period piece, the film sported a superb cast, which included Anthony Quinn (who won a Best Supporting Actor Oscar as Zapata's brother), Jean Peters, and Joseph Wiseman. Brando was again nominated for Best Actor. In what many consider his finest performance, Brando played Terry Malloy in another Kazan film, *On the Waterfront* (1954). The Malloy character was a street tough who betrays his brother and other union-related, local gangsters, and Brando was brilliant in the role. Playing opposite the ingenue Eva Marie Saint and veteran performers Lee J. Cobb, Karl Malden, and Rod Steiger, Brando gave a naturalistic performance, enhanced by the feature distorting makeup he wore, in a stunning display of Method acting. This bravura performance won Brando a Best Actor Oscar.

Even at this early point in his career, Brando was already world famous. Much of this had to do with his willingness to accept difficult roles. Demonstrating his

versatility as a performer, for instance, he took the role of the singing, dancing Sky Masterson in *Guys and Dolls*; he also took up the challenge of playing Mark Antony in a screen adaptation of *Julius Caesar*, a production that featured a star-studded cast, including British acting stalwarts James Mason and John Gielgud. Brando more than held his own in this film, and he was invited by Gielgud to do a run of Shakespeare plays in England, although he declined the invitation.

In the interval between making *Julius Caesar* and *On the Waterfront*, Brando agreed to play a motorcycle hoodlum in the cult film *The Wild One* (1953), forgettable for everything except the brooding, explosive vulnerability Brando brought to his role. Unlike James Dean, another brilliant protégé of Kazan's, who died in a tragic car accident after making only three films, Brando combined vulnerability with menace. Indeed, where Dean touched audiences with his ability to express a certain sense of young, male fragility, Brando's characters, even the young men, seemed wholly grown—and very dangerous. Interestingly, later in his career, Brando would play a series of paternalistic characters, most notably in *The Godfather* (1972), *Last Tango in Paris* (1973), and *Apocalypse Now* (1979), whose rage, carefully controlled and hidden beneath placid exteriors, boils just under the surface, making them threats to everyone around them.

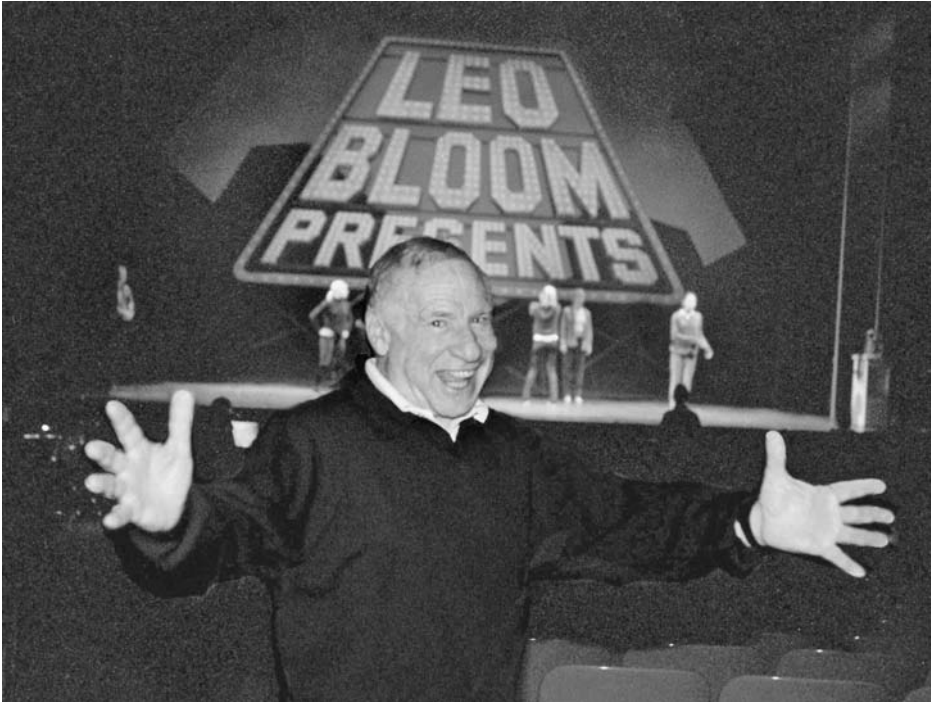
Brando was sometimes accused of being lazy—an extraordinary natural talent, who tended to be self-indulgent and undisciplined, and who never fully realized his true potential. This is often a criticism leveled at those to whom things seem to come too easily. Yet, in Brando's case, starting in his mid-twenties, he made 27 films in 23 years, earning multiple Oscar nominations and working with such heralded directors as Kazan, Bernardo Bertolucci, Arthur Penn, John Huston, Sidney Lumet, Fred Zinnemann, Charlie Chaplin, and Francis Ford Coppola. In his fifties, and having given numerous iconic performances, he was ready for semiretirement, during which he wanted only to play small parts with outsized salaries. Brando made a dozen films at this point, none of them particularly memorable. After providing audiences some of the most viscerally exciting, dynamic, and startling performances in screen history, Brando died in 2004.

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—James Delmont

BROOKS, MEL. A deeply devoted family man who is profoundly committed to his Jewish faith, Mel Brooks has long been one of Hollywood's most influential figures. Known for his outrageous—and some would say offensive—films, Brooks has built a reputation as a master comedic writer.



Mel Brooks poses before the set of his Broadway production *The Producers* in 2001. In that year *The Producers* won a total of 12 Tony Awards, the most ever for a Broadway production.

Born Melvin Kaminsky on June 28, 1926, in New York City to Jewish immigrant parents, Brooks was the youngest child in his family. Following his father's death in 1929, Brooks became preoccupied with his own mortality, paying close attention to his physical well-being. He took great comfort in watching movies—his early favorite was the 1931 production of *Frankenstein*—as well as listening to radio comedies such as *The Yiddish Philosopher* featuring Eddie Cantor. After graduating high school in 1944, Brooks joined the army. Serving in Belgium during World War II, Brooks was frustrated and angered by the anti-Semitism that marked America's armed forces at the time. Following the war, he turned to comedy, accepting a job from Sid Caesar as a writer for *The Admiral Broadway Revue*.

Although the show lasted for only 19 episodes, Brooks impressed Caesar with his abilities as a comedic writer. Caesar eventually hired him to write for *Your Show of Shows*, which he did from 1950 to 1954. In 1961, Brooks was hired to help Jerry Lewis and Bill Richmond write the script for the feature film *The Ladies Man*. In 1963, he wrote and starred in *The Critic*, a short film in which he watches abstract animations and, not understanding their meaning, heckles the cartoons.

Brooks's first stand-alone feature was the 1968 hit *The Producers*. The story follows Max Bialystock (Zero Mostel), a Broadway producer, and his accountant Leo Bloom (Gene Wilder), as they purposely attempt to produce a failed musical. *The Producers*, which won the 1969 Oscar for Best Writing, Story and Screenplay, was a huge hit

for Brooks and remains his most successful title. A Broadway adaptation of the film opened in 2001 and went on to win 12 Tony Awards. In 2005, a remake of the original film was released, with Nathan Lane and Matthew Broderick reprising their stage roles as Bialystock and Bloom.

Brooks continued his feature film success with two 1974 spoofs: *Young Frankenstein*, a parody of his favorite childhood movie, and *Blazing Saddles*, which took satirical aim at traditional westerns. His next features, *High Anxiety* (1977) and *History of the World: Part I* (1981), were both met with mixed critical reviews. Brooks's next feature, *Spaceballs* (1987), however, was a critical and commercial success. Apart from writing the sci-fi parody, Brooks also starred as President Skroob, who attempts to steal the air from planet Druidia. The 1990s saw two more parodies: *Robin Hood: Men in Tights* (1993) and *Dracula: Dead and Loving It* (1995). More recently, Brooks wrote a film adaptation of his 1960s television series *Get Smart*; the picture was released in 2008.

Brooks's films are marked by their unpredictability, featuring a surprising mix of crude sight gags and childish jokes. In a 1991 interview, Brooks admitted that this often jarring juxtaposition of forms is a significant part of his comedy. Some film critics have suggested that Brooks seems to have a difficult time maintaining a consistent comedic tone throughout his films. In *History of the World*, for instance, he provides viewers with both a hilarious, even iconic, song-and-dance number concerning the Spanish Inquisition, as well as a tedious, drawn-out musical sequence on the French Revolution. It may be that this qualitative unevenness is largely responsible for the less than positive reviews of some of Brooks's films.

Selected Filmography

Dracula: Dead and Loving It (1995); *Robin Hood: Men in Tights* (1993); *Life Stinks* (1991); *Spaceballs* (1987); *The History of the World: Part I* (1981); *High Anxiety* (1977); *Silent Movie* (1976); *Young Frankenstein* (1974); *Blazing Saddles* (1974); *Twelve Chairs, The* (1970); *Producers, The* (1968)

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—Sean Graham

BURTON, TIM. Tim Burton was voted the 49th greatest director of all time in 1996 by *Entertainment Weekly*. He was the youngest director on the list. Burton became an influence in Hollywood at a young age due to his unique, darkly humorous, and often quirky cinematic vision. His films are intensely personal and highly stylized.

Born Timothy William Burton on August 25, 1958, in Burbank, California, he spent much of his childhood secluded and entertained himself by watching horror

movies and drawing. Burton lived near a cemetery and has commented on the “weirdness” of the situation. His rather macabre childhood has influenced his filmmaking.

After high school, Burton studied animation at the California Institute of the Arts, founded by Disney, from whom he would eventually obtain a fellowship. He worked at Disney on *The Fox and the Hound* (1981) and *The Black Cauldron* (1985), but found that he often had artistic differences with his colleagues. Allowed by Disney to work on personal projects, he created a six-minute tribute to the horror actor Vincent Price titled *Vincent* (1982), and the movie *Frankenweenie* (1984), which was judged by studio administrators as unsuitable for children.

Paul Reubens (a.k.a. Pee-wee Herman) was so impressed by *Frankenweenie* that he asked the then 27-year-old Burton to direct *Pee-wee's Big Adventure* (1985), which, to the delight of studio heads, turned out to be a huge hit. His successful turn with this

film led to his being chosen to direct the quirky supernatural comedy *Beetlejuice* (1988), which starred Michael Keaton and which was embraced by critics and audiences alike. Based on the critical and box-office success of these two films, Burton was tapped to direct the enormously expensive *Batman* (1989), on which he again worked with Keaton.

His next movie, *Edward Scissorhands* (1990), is considered by many his seminal work. The film, which featured the extraordinarily talented Johnny Depp as the eerily seductive Scissorhands, found Burton at the height of his creative powers and showcased his ability to create a highly stylized and painstakingly designed film. The working relationship between Burton and Depp has been a fruitful one, as they have gone on to make five more films together.

Batman Returns (1992) saw Burton once again working with Keaton. The film was darker and stranger than the original, showing how much creative freedom he had



Director Tim Burton, November 2010. (Getty Images)

won. The film did well, but many people were disappointed by it. While working on *Batman Returns*, he also produced the wildly popular *The Nightmare Before Christmas* (1993), which he had written himself. The stop-motion animation movie emphasized Burton's gothic style and dark humor. Mixing two of his favorite themes, Christmas and Halloween, today it has become a cult classic.

Although *Ed Wood* (1994), his tribute to the legendary "worst director of all time," did poorly at the box office, it received some of the best critical reviews of Burton's career. The vibrant *Mars Attacks!* (1996) was a step away from his typical style and was met with mediocre reviews and little box-office success, despite the appearances by big name stars.

Burton returned to form with *Sleepy Hollow* (1999), where he again worked with Depp. His next two films were more conventional. The remake *Planet of the Apes* (2001) did well at the box office but was panned by critics. He followed with *Big Fish* (2003), which disappointed fans.

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (2005), a more faithful retelling of Roald Dahl's original story, was a commercial and critical success. His second stop-motion film, *Corpse Bride* (2005), received an Academy Award nomination for Best Animated Feature Film and garnered more critical praise. Many consider it to be the spiritual successor to *The Nightmare Before Christmas*.

His most recent work, *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* (2007), received a Golden Globe nomination for Best Director and won an Oscar for Best Achievement in Art Direction.

As of 2009, all but three of his feature films have been nominated for an Academy Award in some category. *Sweeney Todd* won the Best Motion Picture (Comedy or Musical) and Best Actor (Comedy or Musical) Awards at the 65th Golden Globe Awards.

Selected Filmography

Alice in Wonderland (2010); *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* (2007); *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (2005); *Big Fish* (2003); *Planet of the Apes* (2001); *Sleepy Hollow* (1999); *Mars Attacks!* (1996); *Ed Wood* (1994); *Batman Returns* (1992); *Edward Scissorhands* (1990); *Batman* (1989); *Beetlejuice* (1989); *Pee-wee's Big Adventure* (1985)

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—James Heiney

CAGNEY, JAMES. One of the greatest film actors of all time, and one of the twentieth century's most recognizable faces, James Cagney was the quintessential movie tough guy. Although famous for portraying gangsters, Cagney was also a capable singer, dancer, and light comedian who excelled in a variety of roles. He was nominated three times for an Academy Award, winning once for his performance as lead actor in *Yankee Doodle Dandy* (1942). The unique cadence of his voice also made him one of the most mimicked film personalities of all time.

James Francis Cagney Jr. was born July 17, 1899, in New York City, the son of an Irish American bartender and part-time boxer. One of seven children, Cagney was sickly as a small child but grew up as something of a street brawler. He worked odd jobs to help support his family, including stints as a newspaper copyboy, a waiter, a bellhop and a billiard racker in a pool hall. In 1918, he graduated from Stuyvesant High School and briefly attended Columbia University before dropping out after the death of his father. An excellent athlete, Cagney was an accomplished amateur boxer and baseball player who at one time considered trying to make baseball a career. While working as a package wrapper at Wanamaker's Department Store, Cagney heard from a fellow employee about a vaudeville troupe looking for entertainers and willing to pay \$35 a week, good money at the time. Cagney auditioned for the outfit and, ironically, the future tough guy won a place in an all-male chorus that cross-dressed as females. Ignoring his mother's pleas to give up the pursuit of a stage career, Cagney sought out more theater work and eventually joined the vaudeville circuit, touring primarily as a singer, dancer, and comedian. In 1922, he married actress Frances Willard Vernon, with whom he would remain for the rest of his life. The couple had two children.

After years in vaudeville and performing in plays, Cagney got his big break by landing a role starring opposite Joan Blondell in the Broadway production of *Penny Arcade* (1929). He earned rave reviews for his performance, and as a result Warner Bros. signed the actor and cast him in *Sinners' Holiday* (1930), the film version of the play. More films followed, and in 1931 Cagney won widespread praise for his breakthrough performance as a gangster in *The Public Enemy*. In the film, Cagney's character violently smashed a grapefruit into the face of actress Mae Clarke in what many film historians describe as



Movie poster for the 1934 film *Jimmy the Gent*, starring Jimmy Cagney and Bette Davis. (Library of Congress)

one of the most significant scenes in movie history. The scene established Cagney's rough-and-tumble reputation in the mind of the public and led to more "darker roles." He starred in a string of successful films with good friend Pat O'Brien, including *Devil Dogs of the Air* (1935), *Ceiling Zero* (1935), *Angels with Dirty Faces* (1938), and *Torrid Zone* (1940). Cagney also gave memorable performances as the gangster who gunned down Humphrey Bogart in *The Roaring Twenties* (1939) and as a blind boxer in *City of Conquest* (1940). As a result, by the beginning of the 1940s the 41-year-old star had established himself as one of Hollywood's biggest box-office draws.

In 1942 Cagney shed his tough-guy image to take on what for him was a dream role, starring as multitalented singer, dancer, composer, and theatrical producer George M. Cohan in *Yankee Doodle Dandy*. Many considered this Cagney's greatest performance, and the patriotic theme of the film played well to an American public only a few

months removed from the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The film earned eight Oscar nominations, and Cagney received the Academy Award for Best Actor in a lead role for his performance. That same year, Cagney formed his own production company and was elected president of the Screen Actors Guild. After the release of *Yankee Doodle Dandy*, Cagney raised money for the war effort and tirelessly toured military bases in the United States and Britain, performing for thousands of troops.

Through the 1940s and 1950s Cagney continued making movies, either through Warner Bros. or his own production company. In 1961, at the age of 62, he retired from films after starring in the Billy Wilder comedy *One, Two, Three*. He remained retired for the next 20 years until 1981, when he appeared in Milos Forman's *Ragtime*, his last film performance. During the latter stages of his life Cagney received countless accolades for his body of work, including Lifetime Achievement Awards from the

American Film Institute and the Screen Actors Guild. On March 30, 1986, Cagney died at his farm in Stanfordville, New York, at age 86. President Ronald Reagan delivered the eulogy at the actor's funeral.

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—Ben Wynne

CAMPION, JANE. Jane Campion is a highly acclaimed director from New Zealand who began her career in the 1980s. Winner of the Palme d'Or for short film in 1986 and feature film in 1993, Campion is also only one of four women nominated for an Academy Award for direction. Her films are known for complex character relationships—often dealing frankly with sexuality and family dysfunction—and rich cinematography and costume design. Campion frequently writes as well as directs her films, and has received awards for original screenplays.

Campion was born April 30, 1954, to Richard Campion, theatrical director and co-founder of the New Zealand Players Company, and Edith Armstrong, a stage actress. She grew up in New Zealand and attended Victoria University, graduating in 1975 with a bachelor's degree in Anthropology. After college, she moved to Australia for art school, graduating from the Sydney College of Arts with a bachelor's in painting in 1979. Scholarly examinations of her work have cited her academic experiences as significant to her filmmaking, pointing to her background in painting as an influence in her use of colored lighting and her background in anthropology as an influence in her explorations of multicultural issues.

It was at the Sydney College of Arts that she made her first film, a short called *Tissues*, about a father who is arrested for child molestation. This film won her entrance to the Australian Film, Television, and Radio School, from which she graduated in 1984. While a student there, she made a number of critically popular short films. Her first effort, *Mishaps of Seduction and Conquest*, wove a parallel story between famed English mountaineer George Mallory's failed attempt to scale Everest and the fictional Geoffrey Mallory's seduction of a female writer. The picture cut between the two stories, utilizing newsreel footage and original film and applying silent movie-style title cards in between the individual scenes. Her first critically successful film, *An Exercise in Discipline-Peel*, was made in 1982. The short film, about the escalating tension between a man, his sister, and his son during a car trip, won Campion her first Palme d'Or at the 1986 Cannes Film Festival. Campion followed *Exercise in Discipline-Peel* with *Passionless Moments*, a series of linked short subjects written and directed by Campion and her boyfriend Gerard Lee. The film, which dealt with inconsequential moments in the lives of various people in a neighborhood, won the most popular short

film award at the 1983 Sydney Film Festival. Campion's final film at AFTRS was her thesis project, *A Girl's Own Story*, a tale of adolescent girls in the early 1960s that dealt with themes of family dysfunction and adolescent sexuality.

After graduation, Campion worked on several projects for Australian television, directing the film *Two Friends*, centered on two adolescent female friends and their gradual alienation from one another. The film inverted its plot, telling the story in reverse, from a point of total alienation to the earlier days of friendship. During this period, she also directed an episode of the television show *Dancing Daze* for Australian television and made the miniseries *An Angel at My Table*, based on the autobiographies of New Zealand author Janet Frame, focusing especially on her struggle with mental illness and her emergence as a poet. This miniseries would go on to be adapted into a single film and shown at international film festivals in Venice and Toronto.

Campion's 1989 film *Sweetie* was her feature film debut, based partially on the dissolution of her relationship with Gerard Lee. In *Sweetie*, Campion dealt with one of the themes she would return to again and again, family dysfunction. The film begins by exploring the relationship between Kay and Louis; Kay gets involved with Louis based on a fortune teller's advice. After they move in together, they decide to plant a tree in their small backyard, creating a great deal of tension between them. Their relationship, already dysfunctional, is complicated by the arrival of Kay's mentally unstable sister, Sweetie. The separation of Kay's parents and other complications in her life lead to a confrontation with a naked, painted Sweetie in a wobbly tree house—although a bit heavy-handed, the metaphors of stability/instability are nonetheless touching—that results in Sweetie's death. While this film was shown at Cannes and also nominated for the Palme d'Or for full-length film, it met with a mixed audience response, due in part to its exploration of the controversial theme of mental illness.

It was Campion's second feature, *The Piano*, that would bring her great acclaim. The picture, starring Holly Hunter, Sam Neill, and Harvey Keitel, is set in colonial New Zealand and is based on a love triangle between Alisdair Stewart (Neill), a colonial settler; Ada McGrath (Hunter), his mute mail-order bride who communicates primarily using the titular instrument; and George Baines (Keitel), another settler with close ties to the native Maori. The film was strongly influenced by the European folk-tale "Bluebeard" and by the novel *Wuthering Heights*, as well as by the history of European-Maori contact in New Zealand. The picture also introduced Anna Paquin as the young Flora McGrath, Ada's daughter. After it was screened at Cannes, Campion became the first female director to win the Palme d'Or; the film went on to win Academy Awards for writing and acting.

In 1996, Campion directed *Portrait of a Lady*, an adaptation of the Henry James novel, starring Nicole Kidman, who Campion had first met back when Kidman was in high school. Although the film featured acclaimed talent—including John Malkovich, Barbara Hershey, and John Gielgud—making it proved challenging for Campion, as much of the tension introduced in the source text is centered within the characters. Kidman in particular had difficulty expressing the emotional struggle waged by Isabel Archer, and the film did not garner the same sort of acclaim that was lavished on *The Piano*.

Campion's follow-up to *Portrait of a Lady* was 1999's *Holy Smoke*. Reuniting with Harvey Keitel, Campion co-wrote the screenplay for the picture—with her sister

Anna—as well as directing it. The film, which explores the complex relationship between a former cult member and the man attempting to deprogram her, stars Kate Winslet as Ruth and Keitel as P. J. Waters. As with her previous films, *Holy Smoke* dealt with complex issues related to sexuality, alienation, and loss. The film does end on a redemptive note, however, with Ruth and P. J. corresponding with each other, even as they involve themselves in their new, happier lives.

Campion had originally intended once again to team with Nicole Kidman for *In the Cut* (2003). Kidman, though, withdrew from the project due to her divorce from Tom Cruise, and Meg Ryan stepped into the starring role. *In the Cut* follows the life of Frannie (Ryan), an English teacher who becomes embroiled in an investigation into a serial killer being carried out by Detective Malloy, played by Mark Ruffalo. Marketed as a thriller, the film received mixed reviews; although some critics found the pacing too slow for a thriller, others pointed out that Campion had done a fine job in exploring the psychological elements that defined the different characters. In the end, the film received more attention for its explicit sexual content than for anything else, especially since Ryan—who was well known for her girl-next-door roles in romantic comedies—had replaced Kidman, who would seem to have been better suited for the role of Frannie.

Campion made two short films after 2000, both as part of larger multidirector projects. She contributed *The Water Diary*, a segment examining the effects of a drought that causes a family to sacrifice their horses in order to secure food and water, to the film *8* (2009), which dealt with various issues of world poverty. Her contribution to *Chacun son cinéma* (2007) was a three-minute short titled *The Lady Bug*, which focused on a janitor in a theater poking at a ladybug while a movie in which two women berate a man for his inadequate sexual performance plays in the background.

In 2009, Campion returned to feature films with *Bright Star*, a biographical sketch of the poet John Keats and his romance with Fanny Brawne. *Bright Star* presented a melancholy look at love, focusing on the letters and interactions of the romantic partners rather than on Keats's poetry. The film was praised for the performances of its leads, Abbie Cornish and Ben Winshaw, and was nominated for the Palme d'Or at Cannes.

Campion cites a number of significant directorial influences on her film career, including Akira Kurosawa and Francis Ford Coppola, whose first *Godfather* film she watches religiously once each year. Additionally, she has been influenced by the work of a number of contemporary female directors, including Gillian Armstrong, Alison McLean, Niki Caro, and Sally Potter. Campion continues to speak out about the paucity of woman working in the industry, especially behind the camera. As the only female director to have won the Palme d'Or, and one of only four to have been nominated for an Academy Award for direction, however, she has become an inspiration for other woman trying to break into the field.

See also: Piano, The

Selected Filmography

Bright Star (2009); *In the Cut* (2003); *Piano, The* (1993); *Sweetie* (1989); *A Girl's Own Story* (1984); *Passionless Moments* (1983)

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—B. Grantham Aldred

CAPRA, FRANK. An Italian immigrant, Frank Capra was a major contributor to the development of the American film industry. A director, writer, and producer of narrative pictures and documentaries, Capra created films characterized by humanistic themes and a unique cinematic style. His enormously popular pictures of the 1930s and 1940s—among them *It Happened One Night* (1934), *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* (1936), *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939), and *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946)—are still considered some of the best films ever made.

Frank Russell Capra was born Francesco Rosario Capra in Bisacquino, Sicily, on May 18, 1897, and immigrated to the United States in 1903 with his father, mother, and siblings. The family joined an older brother who had previously settled in California. The youngest child, Capra attended school, sold newspapers, and worked at other jobs to finance his education. He graduated from Manual Arts High School in Los Angeles and then the Throop Institute (now the California Institute of Technology) with a bachelor of science degree in chemical engineering.

During World War I, Capra enlisted in the U.S. Army; allowed to finish his college studies, he entered the military in October 1918. Not yet a naturalized citizen, he was stationed at Fort Winfield Scott, at the Presidio of San Francisco, where he taught ballistics and mathematics to artillerymen. His military career was short-lived, however, as he contracted the Spanish flu and was medically discharged in December 1918. Capra changed his name to Frank Russell Capra when he became a U.S. citizen in 1920.

After leaving the service, Capra tramped through Arizona, Nevada, and California, tutoring, hustling poker, playing guitar, and selling different products door-to-door. In San Francisco, he answered an advertisement from a "movie studio" and learned to make one-reel silent films based on poems. Enthralled by that first, limited experience, he set out to learn every step of the process of making films. He became a prop man, editor, and a gag writer for Bob Eddy. In Hollywood, working for Hal Roach, he wrote gags for the *Our Gang* kids. Writing for Mack Sennett's Keystone Comedies, he learned the dynamics of staging comedy: timing, building a gag, the heaping of "business on business" until the big one, the "topper," was revealed.

Capra made his first feature films, *Tramp, Tramp, Tramp*, *The Strong Man* (1926), and *Long Pants* (1927), for Harry Langdon, a famous, baby-faced comic with a gift for pantomime and an innocence bordering on the grotesque. Writing for the

Our Gang kids and for Harry Langdon, Capra learned to respect the integrity of characterization: the gag was important, but it had to fit into the plot and be true to the personality of the characters.

Working under Harry Cohn—“His Crudeness”—at CBC, a small “poverty row” studio that later became Columbia, Capra made a series of silent films and began dabbling in the mechanics of sound. It was at this time that he made his first A-picture, *Submarine* (1928), and developed a close working relationship with cameraman Joseph Walker and screenwriters Jo Swerling and Robert Riskin. He also began to develop his own cinematic style.

Convinced that a director should be responsible of every aspect of the filmmaking process, Capra began to make progressively more complex pictures. These included *The Donovan Affair* (1929), *Ladies of Leisure* (1930), *The Miracle Woman* (1931), *Platinum Blonde* (1931), *Forbidden* (1932), and *American Madness* (1932). Working with Riskin, Capra introduced themes of idealism and sentimentality into these early pictures, setting the stage for what was to come in his later films.

Although a box-office failure, Capra’s *The Bitter Tea of General Yen* (1933) had the distinction of being the first motion picture to make its screen debut in Radio City Music Hall. He followed *Bitter Tea* with *Lady for a Day* (1933), a box-office hit that was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Picture.

His brilliant *It Happened One Night* (1934), generally considered the film world’s first romantic comedy, started out with several strikes against it. Its working title, *Night Bus*, was uninspired; and because of the storyline, the actors would have few costume changes and visit a limited number of locales. While the first script was turned down by perhaps a dozen noted actors, Capra was able to convince Claudette Colbert—available for just a



Lieutenant Colonel Frank Capra in London on August 19, 1943. Capra, a Hollywood filmmaker who was shocked by Pearl Harbor, enlisted and was assigned to produce war films during World War II. (AP/Wide World Photos)

few weeks at double her usual salary—and Clark Gable—on loan from his home studio—to come onboard. Capra and Riskin then worked their magic on the script, making it contemporary, witty, and, as it turned out, timeless. A rich and spoiled socialite, literally escaping an arranged marriage—she is forced to dive from her father's yacht and swim ashore—boards a night bus in New York City, where she encounters an unemployed, fast-talking reporter—a man who doesn't even wear an undershirt! The film proved to be a Depression-era fairy tale: the Princess and the Commoner meet, fall in love, and live happily ever after. Opening slowly, the film turned out to be the “must-see” movie of 1935; it also won Academy Awards for Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor, Best Actress, and Best Screenplay.

The films that followed *It Happened One Night* saw the development of Capra's signature style; his use of themes and visual treatments that came to be described as “Capra-esque.” Most of these films were essentially comedies of manners, witty contemporary morality plays that celebrated the values of small-town America and the virtues of democracy. Generally, they pitted a good man—usually a naive, sincere, and unaffected man—against the forces of evil permeating American society: the corruption of the moneyed elite and the ruthlessness of arrogant politicians. Most notable among these films were *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* (1936), *You Can't Take It with You*—which earned Capra his second and third Oscars for direction—*Lady for a Day* (1933), *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939), and *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946).

During World II, Capra, commissioned as a major in the U.S. Army Signal Corps, supervised the making of documentary films, in particular his *Why We Fight* series: *Prelude to War* (1942), *The Nazis Strike* (1942), *The Battle of Britain* (1943), *Divide and Conquer* (1943), *Know Your Enemy: Japan* (1945), *Tunisian Victory* (1945), and *Two Down and One to Go* (1945). These documentaries may be understood as thematic montages—not so much directed as edited, or in the case of *Why We Fight*, redacted from existing war-footage, much of it taken from enemy newsreels and Nazi propaganda films. Overlaying this filmic material with anti-Nazi commentary, the pictures in the *Why We Fight* series served as military training films that were supposed to help soldiers, and the American people, understand the ideological background to the war. Significantly, the production of the series earned Capra a Distinguished Service Medal. In addition to be recognized by the armed forces, *Prelude to War* won the 1942 Academy Award for Documentary Feature; by the end of the war in 1945, this film had been seen by nine million people.

Although Capra continued to make films for another four decades after America climbed out of the Depression and helped win World War II in the 1940s, his pictures became less and less popular with audiences. His sentimental idealism and homespun heroes seemed naive and intellectually dishonest to an increasing number of postwar viewers. Yet, even though they fell out of favor in postwar America, Capra's films, with their well-crafted comedic sensibilities, their whimsical characterizations, and their message of the basic goodness of humanity, continue to resonate with contemporary audiences.

In 1982, Capra was honored by the American Film Institute with a “Salute to Frank Capra,” and in 1986, he received the National Medal of Arts. Capra died in 1991.

Selected Filmography

Pocketful of Miracles (1961); *A Hole in the Head* (1959); *Here Comes the Groom* (1951); *Riding High* (1950); *State of the Union* (1948); *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946); *Your Job in Germany* (1945); *Arsenic and Old Lace* (1944); *Meet John Doe* (1941); *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939); *You Can't Take It with You* (1938); *Lost Horizon* (1937); *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* (1936); *It Happened One Night* (1934); *Lady for a Day* (1933); *The Bitter Tea of General Yen* (1933)

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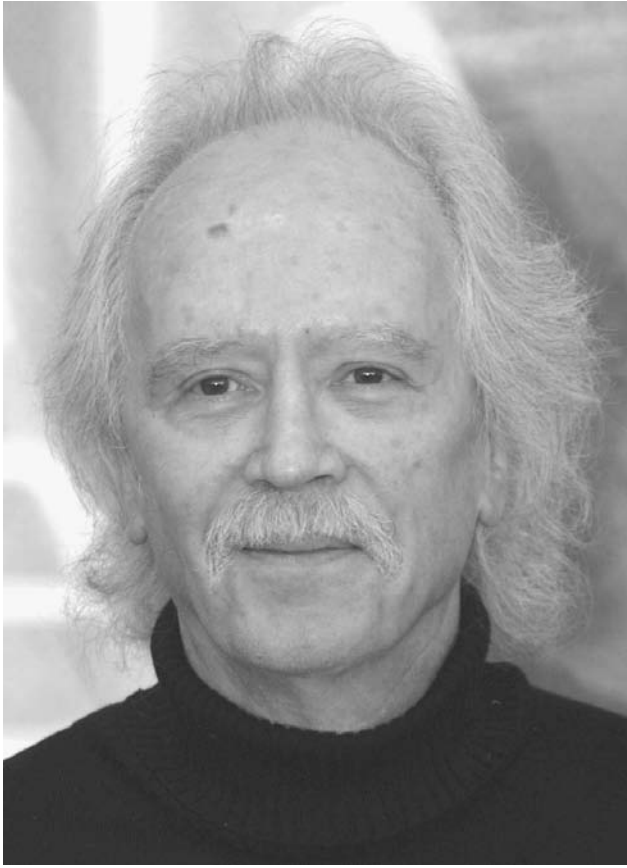
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—Arbolina L. Jennings

CARPENTER, JOHN. John Carpenter is one of the key figures in American horror and science fiction filmmaking. He influenced the direction of the genres through his intelligent and moody films that bear his unmistakable style. His career has spanned four decades and encompassed over 30 movies as producer and director. He has also left his mark as a writer, actor, and composer. His compositions and movies have won numerous special interest awards.

Born John Howard Carpenter on January 16, 1948, in Carthage, New York, he was raised in Bowling Green, Kentucky, where his father, who had a profound musical influence on him, was the head of the music department at Western Kentucky University. Carpenter composes the music for almost all of his films. His most famous theme is that from *Halloween*. His music is generally synthesized with piano accompaniment and atmospherics. He enrolled in the prestigious film program at the University of Southern California. Carpenter's first directorial effort was *Dark Star*, part of his master's thesis. It received limited theatrical release, was praised by critics, and became a cult classic. Notable was his ability to make a good movie on a limited budget, \$60,000 for this film. He also began his tradition of formally prepending "John Carpenter's" to the movie title for movies that he directed. This was his only movie not filmed in wide-screen. Carpenter is an advocate of the composition space that wide-screen affords.

Assault on Precinct 13 (1976) was his first professional endeavor and a salute to Howard Hawks. It is an example of the influence that westerns had on Carpenter. *Halloween* (1978) established Carpenter as a master of the horror genre. He avoided the gore of other slasher films and instead built suspense through visual elements, most



Director John Carpenter poses at the 58th International Film Festival, September 2001, in Venice, Italy. (AFP/Getty Images)

notably his hallmark of minimalist lighting and nuance. Part of the movie's success is due to Carpenter's chilling score. *Halloween* grossed more than \$65 million in its initial release and went on to become one of the industry's most successful independent films.

Carpenter frequently appears as an actor in his own movies and did so in *The Fog* (1980). He was displeased with the final cut of *The Fog* and, as a sign of his integrity as a director, shot additional scenes until it was acceptable to him. He followed *The Fog* with the critically acclaimed *Escape from New York* (1981), which gained both a cult following and mainstream success. Kurt Russell, with whom Carpenter had previously worked when making the made for TV movie *Elvis*, was featured in *Escape from New York*. Russell became part of the community of actors and crew members with whom Carpenter especially enjoys working.

The Thing (1982), ostensibly a remake of the 1951 picture *The Thing from Another World*, provided Carpenter with his largest budget (\$15 million) to date. Although it was his first financial failure, the movie did find an audience on cable and home video and is now regarded as an excellent horror film. Carpenter won over critics with the release of his 1984 picture *Starman*. A departure from his horror films, *Starman* was a science fiction romance featuring Jeff Bridges and Karen Allen. A modest commercial success, many felt that the offering was Carpenter's attempt to make up for the disappointing numbers from *The Thing*.

In 1986, Carpenter released *Big Trouble in Little China*, a big-budget action-adventure comedy that also produced disappointing box-office numbers. After this, he would have trouble finding financing. Returning to his horror film roots, he directed two well-made, low-budget features in the 1980s: *Prince of Darkness* (1987) and *They Live* (1988). The 1990s proved to be a decade in which Carpenter released a series of poorly performing films, the one bright spot being *Vampires* (1998), which starred the always reliable James Woods in the lead role.

Ghosts of Mars, released in 2001, was panned by critics. Carpenter's reputation as a filmmaker who can deliver brilliant horror and science fiction pictures remains intact with his fans, however. His earlier films are considered classics and have continued to perform well on home video. Several have been remade, including *Assault on Precinct 13* and *The Fog* (both 2005). More recently, Rob Zombie has produced and directed *Halloween* (2007), a reimagining of Carpenter's 1978 film.

See also: *Halloween*

Selected Filmography

L.A. Gothic (2010); *Ghosts of Mars* (2001); *Vampires* (1998); *Escape from L.A.* (1996); *Village of the Damned* (1995); *Memoirs of the Invisible Man* (1992); *They Live* (1988); *Prince of Darkness* (1987); *Big Trouble in Little China* (1986); *Starman* (1984); *Escape from New York* (1981); *Fog, The* (1980); *Halloween* (1978)

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—James Heiney

CASSAVETES, JOHN. One of the most influential figures in American independent cinema, John Cassavetes was a writer, director, and actor whose uncompromising personal vision made him a perpetual Hollywood outsider during his lifetime and an inspirational legend after his death.

Born on December 9, 1929, in New York City, John Nicholas Cassavetes was the second son of Greek immigrant parents. Shifts in fortunes led to frequent moves throughout the 1930s, including a return to Greece, but the family eventually settled on Long Island in the 1940s. After graduating from Port Washington High School and flunking out of several colleges, Cassavetes decided to become an actor and entered the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York City in 1949.

For several years after graduating from the academy, Cassavetes struggled to get parts. Although trained for the stage, he discovered that the new medium of television provided him the best opportunities. Between 1954 and 1959 Cassavetes made close to 100 television appearances, eventually landing the starring role in *Johnny Staccato*, an NBC television series about a piano-playing detective, in 1959. Television led to film roles; and, despite a reputation in Hollywood for being difficult, Cassavetes crafted many memorable characters in the 1960s, such as Johnny North, the willing victim in *The Killers* (1964); Victor Franko, the tough convict turned soldier in *The Dirty Dozen* (1967); and Guy Woodhouse, the deceitful husband in *Rosemary's Baby* (1968).



Actor and director John Cassavetes poses during an episode of the television anthology series *The Alfred Hitchcock Hour* on January 21, 1964. The episode, co-starring Cassavetes's wife Gena Rowlands and directed by John Brahm, was originally broadcast on March 6, 1964. (Getty Images)

Despite his success, Cassavetes was dissatisfied with the parts he was offered and with the bland commercialism of American television and film. He quickly got involved in side projects that allowed him to explore roles and artistic ideas that the mainstream industry considered too radical. His first film project grew from improvisations at the Variety Arts Studio, a workshop he co-founded with Burt Lane in New York in 1957. *Shadows* (1959) was an experimental film that dealt with interracial relationships and racism, featuring a jazz soundtrack by bassist Charles Mingus and saxophonist Shafi Hadi. The improvisational film was championed by *Film Culture* founder Jonas Mekas, and helped launch the New American Cinema movement in the 1960s. Cassavetes's next film, *Too Late Blues* (1961), had a similar focus on jazz and spontaneity. With his third film, *Faces* (1968), Cassavetes came closest to achieving mainstream success. A radical condemnation of middle-class values shot in *cinéma vérité* style, *Faces* earned three Academy Award nominations, several international prizes, and respectable box-office receipts.

Like many independents, Cassavetes relied on a group of collaborators that consistently helped with his productions. Seymour Cassel remained a close friend throughout Cassavetes's life, and appeared in many of his films. He earned an Oscar nomination as Best Supporting Actor for his role in *Faces*. He also starred in *Minnie and Moskowitz* (1971), playing the zany parking lot attendant, Seymour Moskowitz, who ultimately finds true love. Peter Falk and Ben Gazzara were also close collaborators. Both appeared with Cassavetes in *Husbands* (1970), and both would star in subsequent Cassavetes films. Falk played the oppressive construction worker Nick Longhetti in *A Woman Under the Influence* (1974). Gazzara starred as Cosmo Vitelli in *The Killing of a Chinese Bookie* (1976).

No collaborator worked on more of Cassavetes's films than actress Gena Rowlands, whom Cassavetes married in 1954. Rowlands was twice nominated for Academy Awards as Best Actress in performances that Cassavetes directed. In *A Woman Under the Influence*, Rowlands played Mabel Longhetti, an eccentric housewife and mother who gradually loses her grip on reality. In *Gloria* (1980), she played a gangster's moll who winds up taking care of a child whose parents were murdered. Cassavetes often wrote parts to showcase Rowlands's talent for playing women in crisis. She played an aging actress who has sacrificed everything for her career in *Opening Night* (1977), and a mother whose husband and daughter reject her in *Love Streams* (1984).

Although Cassavetes's films were never widely distributed in his lifetime, he is one of a handful of American artists to be nominated for Academy Awards in three separate categories: acting (*The Dirty Dozen*), writing (*Faces*), and directing (*A Woman under the Influence*).

Cassavetes died on February 3, 1989, of cirrhosis of the liver, leaving behind three children, Nick, Alexandra, and Zoe. A major influence on Martin Scorsese and countless other filmmakers, Cassavetes's films testify to his determination to make profoundly personal statements regardless of cost.

Selected Filmography

Big Trouble (1986); *Love Streams* (1984); *Gloria* (1980); *Opening Night* (1977); *The Killing of a Chinese Bookie* (1976); *A Woman under the Influence* (1974); *Minnie and Moskowitz* (1971); *Husbands* (1970); *Faces* (1968); *A Child Is Waiting* (1963); *Too Late Blues* (1961); *Shadows* (1959)

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—Joseph Christopher Schaub

CHAPLIN, CHARLIE. One of the most famous and recognizable figures in cinema, Charles (Charlie) Spencer Chaplin was born on April 16, 1889, in London. His parents, Charles Sr. and Hannah Chaplin, were both music hall performers on South London's vaudeville circuit. Chaplin's childhood was plagued by poverty and

hardship. Following his birth, Charles Sr. abandoned Hannah, a very young Charlie, and his half-brother Spencer Hawks. To help support the family, Chaplin danced and performed in the streets for change.

Chaplin's skills as a performer caused him to be noticed by vaudevillian troupes. In 1898, at the age of nine, he began to tour with a clog-dancing troupe, the Eight Lancashire Lads. Chaplin's talents at improvisation and pantomime opened doors to a number of minor roles in theatrical productions. He returned to vaudeville in 1906, joining Casey's Circus, a troupe that specialized in impersonating prominent personalities of the day. By 1907, Chaplin was brought to the attention of Fred Karno, the founder and leader of England's most famous pantomime troupe. Spencer, already a member of Karno's Troup, lobbied hard to get his brother Charlie a spot in the group.

Mentored by Karno, Chaplin soon emerged as a featured player of the troupe. With the Karno Troup, he toured England, Paris, and, later, the United States, in 1910 and 1913. Praised by critics, he gained the attention of Mack Sennett, founder of the Keystone Film Studio. Chaplin, seeking to expand his career beyond the stage, signed with Keystone in May 1913. After the release of his first film in February 1914, *Making a Living*, he appeared in 33 one- or two-reel comedies and one feature film for Keystone. He immersed himself in the process of filmmaking and soon was writing and directing films for Keystone.

It was with Keystone that he created his most endearing character, the Tramp. Unsure how to utilize Chaplin's talents, Sennett ordered him to develop a costume for his bit part in the film *Mabel's Strange Predicament*. Donning oversized trousers and shoes (size 14, so large they had to be worn on the wrong feet), undersized coat and derby, a cane, and wearing a toothbrush mustache, he created an iconic figure of the early cinema. The Tramp, or a variation of the character, was a Chaplin staple for the next 22 years.

A number of disputes emerged between Chaplin and Keystone, primarily over salary and artistic control. Leaving Keystone, he signed next with Essanay Studios in November 1914. He completed 14 films for Essanay, including *The Tramp* (released April 11, 1915). During his time with Essanay, his popularity continued to soar. Known as "Chaplinitis," his characters inspired fans to imitate their hero. Songs were written about him, merchandise sold, and numerous impersonators emerged. Essanay, seeking to profit from his popularity, pushed him to release more and more films. Chaplin, however, was taking longer to finish each picture. With the end of his Essanay contract, he signed a one-year contract with Mutual Film Corporation worth \$670,000 and that gave him complete artistic freedom. He completed 12 two-reel films over the next year.

In June 1917, Chaplin left Mutual and signed with First National Films. First National allowed him to produce his own films and to establish his own studio. His studio, constructed on Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood, was the setting for his films for the next 35 years. His initial First National release, *A Dog's Life*, paired Chaplin's Tramp with the down-and-out dog Scraps. This laid the foundation for his teaming with young Jackie Coogan in 1921's *The Kid*.

It was during his time with First National that Chaplin began to use his influence within the cinematic community to push his political agenda. With the entry of the

United States into World War I, he enlisted, only to fail the physical. Personally anti-militaristic, he aided the war effort by touring with Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks on the third Liberty Bond Drive. Impressed with the support for the war that he witnessed on the tour, he put on a uniform for the 1918 film *Shoulder's Arms*, in which his character actually captures the German Kaiser.

In 1921, Chaplin made a triumphal return to England. Scandal, however, followed. Upon leaving the United States, he was asked his opinion of Bolshevism. His vague comments led many in the United States to the conclusion that he was a communist sympathizer. Upon his return to the United States, he began working for United Artists, a production company founded by Chaplin, Fairbanks, D. W. Griffith, and Pickford. It was while he was with United Artists that Chaplin produced his most famous films, including *The Gold Rush* (1925), *City Lights* (1931), and *Modern Times* (1936). Interestingly, even with the development of talking motion pictures, he remained steadfast in his support of the silent film. *Modern Times*, however, marked the end of his silent career, and also the retirement of his Tramp persona.

His first sound film, *The Great Dictator* (1940), was his most controversial. A satirical look at Hitler and Nazism, the final speech, given by Chaplin's character, led many critics to believe his sentiments lay with communism and the Soviet Union. His next film, *Monsieur Verdoux* (1947), continued to stir up controversy and was banned in parts of the United States.

Controversy and scandal finally caught up with Chaplin. Traveling to England with his family, he was informed in September 1952 that he could not return to the United States until he addressed questions concerning his political affiliations. He decided to remain in exile in Switzerland, returning to the United States only once more, in 1972, to receive a special Academy Award for his contribution to the cinema. Overseas, he produced and starred in two more films, the last being *A Countess from Hong Kong* in 1966. Chaplin died on December 25, 1977.

Selected Filmography

A Countess from Hong Kong (1967); *The Chaplin Revue* (1959); *A King in New York* (1957); *Lime-light* (1952); *Monsieur Verdoux* (1947); *The Great Dictator* (1940); *Modern Times* (1936); *City Lights* (1931); *The Circus* (1928); *The Gold Rush* (1925); *A Woman of Paris: A Drama of Fate* (1923); *The Pilgrim* (1923); *Pay Day* (1922); *Nice and Friendly* (1922); *The Idle Class* (1921); *The Kid* (1921); *A Day's Pleasure* (1919); *Sunnyside* (1919); *The Professor* (1919); *Shoulder Arms* (1918)

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—Robert W. Malick

CHAYEFSKY, PADDY. One of the most distinguished dialogue writers in American cinema, Sydney “Paddy” Chayefsky was a multimedia talent, writing for film, radio, television, and the Broadway stage. Born on January 29, 1923, to Jewish parents in the Bronx, New York, Chayefsky played semiprofessional football and studied accounting and languages in college. Serving in World War II until a landmine explosion cut his army career short and earned him a Purple Heart, Chayefsky gained the nickname “Paddy” as a result of his attempts to avoid kitchen duty by attending Catholic mass. While recovering from his injuries in London, Chayefsky began writing the musical *No T.O. for Love* with fellow patient and composer Jimmy Livingston. Actor Curt Conway discovered Chayefsky’s script and produced it as a successful Special Services show in London and Paris, with Chayefsky as a cast member. The show ultimately led to Chayefsky spending the rest of his military career working on the war documentary *The True Glory*.

After a brief stint working in his uncle’s print shop, Chayefsky made his first attempt at a writing career; he was initially disappointed, however, suffering through a botched move to Hollywood and a brief tenure writing radio gags for Robert Q. Lewis. Chayefsky eventually got his career on track, though, taking on writing assignments adapting plays for radio and television. During his television career, he wrote over a dozen teleplays, some of which—*Printer’s Measure* (1953), *Middle of the Night* (1954), and *The Catered Affair* (1955), for example—demonstrated how thoroughly he had been influenced by growing up in a multiethnic, immigrant Bronx neighborhood. Garnering critical acclaim for his work, he became the first television writer to have his collected teleplays published. Of his numerous television successes, his 1953 teleplay for *Marty*—an endearing story about a lonely, lovelorn 34-year-old Bronx butcher—led to a Hollywood contract.

Learning from his earlier Hollywood failures, Chayefsky asked for an unprecedented contract that gave him full creative control over the screenplay for *Marty* (1954), a decision that led to him taking \$13,000 and 5 percent of the film’s net profit rather than the customary six-figure fee. Enlisting Delbert Mann to direct and Ernest Borgnine to play the lead, Chayefsky embarked on a thorough preproduction rehearsal schedule that sharply contrasted with standard practices in studio film production. Despite his unorthodox methods—or perhaps as a result of them—*Marty* earned him his first Academy Award for screen writing; the film also won Oscars for Best Picture, Best Actor, and Best Director.

In the wake of *Marty*’s success, Chayefsky adapted his teleplays *The Bachelor Party* (1957) and *Middle of the Night* (1959) as feature film screenplays and sold *The Catered Affair* (1956) to MGM. Over Chayefsky’s mild objections, the studio hired Gore Vidal to adapt the latter teleplay. He now focused his attention on *The Goddess* (1958), a John Cromwell film loosely based on the life of Marilyn Monroe. Though he received an Academy Award nomination for his work on this picture, it did not prove to be as critically or financially successful as *Marty*.

After *The Goddess* and *Middle of the Night*, Chayefsky’s career underwent a change, as his writing shifted away from working-class realism toward an aesthetic rooted in technical jargon and social satire. Adapting William Bradford Huie’s novel *The Americanization of Emily* (1964) for Arthur Hiller, he turned his source material into

a World War II satire, set in London, that explored notions of bravery and nationalism and led to Production Code clashes over the film's explicit sexuality and nudity. After adapting the Gold Rush musical *Paint Your Wagon* (1969) for his friend Joshua Logan, he reteamed with Hiller to write the script for *The Hospital* (1971). The biting critique of the dehumanization of urban medical centers and the failure of 1960s-style counter-culture earned Chayefsky his second Academy Award.

His most enduring work was the screenplay he wrote for Sidney Lumet's 1976 film *Network*. Interestingly, the original screenplay, concerning "the mad prophet of the air-waves" Howard Beale (Peter Finch) and his exploitation by prophet-hungry media executives, took direct aim at the industry that gave Chayefsky his start. Lumet slightly altered his own omniscient narrative format to accommodate Chayefsky's stylized voice-overs, and *Network* won Chayefsky his third Academy Award. His final screenplay was an adaptation of his own novel *Altered States* (1980); the writer clashed violently with director Ken Russell, reaching the point where he demanded that his name be removed from the final credits.

Despite his film success, Chayefsky asserted that the "theater was his homeground," and he worked steadily on Broadway, adapting *Middle of the Night* to the stage and creating original works such as *The Tenth Man* and *Gideon* while collaborating with iconic figures such as Elia Kazan, Joshua Logan, and Arthur Miller. He also became politically active in the 1970s—a move that was reflected in his writing—founding Writers and Artists for Peace in the Middle East and serving as a delegate to the International Conference on Soviet Jewry. Chayefsky died from an unspecified form of cancer on August 1, 1981.

Selected Filmography

Altered States (1980); *Network* (1976); *The Hospital* (1971); *Paint Your Wagon* (1969); *The Americanization of Emily* (1964); *Middle of the Night* (1959); *The Goddess* (1958); *The Bachelor Party* (1957); *Marty* (1955); *As Young as You Feel* (1951); *The True Glory* (1945)

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—Jerod Ra'Del Hollyfield

COEN, JOEL AND ETHAN. Joel and Ethan Coen (born November 29, 1954, and September 21, 1957, respectively, in Minneapolis) have written and directed more than a dozen films that reflect modern American culture on a number of levels. Spanning a range of genres, the brothers are difficult to categorize. Essentially, their films fit into three broad categories: heartland crime thrillers, Great Depression America, and slapstick class commentary.



Screenwriters, producers, and directors, brothers Ethan (left) and Joel Coen. (AP/Wide World Photos)

Apart from their early script for Sam Raimi's *Crimewave* and Ethan's role as co-writer on two small pieces, the Coen brothers have directed all of their scripts. Beginning with their directorial debut, *Blood Simple* (1984), culture and landscape are revealed as major influences on characters. The first of their heartland crime thrillers, this picture sets an eerily calm backdrop for the grim analysis of adultery and murder. The Coen brothers would revisit the vast Texas scenery again in *No Country for Old Men*. Featuring blackmail and a love affair that leads to murder, *The Man Who Wasn't There* (2001) shares plot similarities with *Blood Simple*. Shot in black and white and set in 1959 Santa Rosa, it does differ from the Coen brothers' first feature,

as it includes humorous caricatures that offset the dark, somber plot.

Perhaps the brothers' most successful heartland picture to date is *No Country for Old Men* (2007). This picture follows a disturbed bounty hunter and the police officer tracking him across West Texas in 1980. Landscape is a key factor, not only as an arena but also as a representation of the Old West, where cowboys rule. This picture earned Oscars for Best Picture, Best Director, Best Writing, and Best Supporting Actor. Sharing sinister characters with *No Country for Old Men*, *Fargo* (1996) employs the amusing dialect of the Eskimo-hat-wearing citizens of Fargo, North Dakota. Unlike the superficial characters seen in the Coen brothers' slapstick social commentaries, *Fargo* and *No Country for Old Men* explore shadowy criminal personalities juxtaposed with down-home police officers. *Fargo* became famous not only for its shocking conclusion, but also for the unusual timbre and the humorous turns of phrase that characterized the speech of the picture's characters. The film garnered Oscars for Best Writing and Best Actress for Frances McDormand.

In their early work, the Coen brothers wrote and directed two Great Depression period pieces, beginning with *Miller's Crossing* (1990). This Prohibition-era picture follows gang lieutenant Tom Regan as he warily attempts to reconcile a mob war. With careful depictions of bossism and mafia warfare, the film offers a vivid portrayal of crime culture in 1930s America. Interestingly, the Coens wrote *Barton Fink* (1991), a story about a Hollywood golden age screenwriter with writer's block, while

they themselves were struggling with the story for *Miller's Crossing*. Set in 1941, it is full of references to classic American film and literature, including loose representations of writers William Faulkner and Clifford Odets.

Later in their careers, the brothers returned to the Great Depression with *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* (2000). Based on Homer's *Odyssey*, this Mississippi travelogue follows three escaped convicts as they weave their way in and out of key moments in American history. The trio encounters crooked politicians, a one-eyed Bible salesman, the KKK, and George "Babyface" Nelson. As with *The Ladykillers* (2004), which is also set in Mississippi, *O Brother Where Art Thou?* incorporates bluegrass, gospel, blues, and country music to help paint a portrait of an era and a culture.

While they have enjoyed more critical success with heartland crime thrillers like *Fargo* and *No Country for Old Men*, the Coen brothers are well known for their love of screwball and slapstick comedies. The first of these projects was *Raising Arizona* (1987). Set in Tempe, Arizona, the film depicts the desert as a mirror of the dull, empty lives of a bumbling petty criminal and his doe-eyed wife. This lower-class couple is envious of the life of a wealthy, obnoxious car salesman. The salesman, they decide, not only has too much money but more than enough children. They decide to kidnap his toddler, resulting in a humorous but cautionary look at class conflict. This commentary is expanded in *The Big Lebowski* (1998), which follows "The Dude" as he stumbles, in a perversely charming way, through the role of a private investigator in early 1990s Los Angeles.

While the Coen brothers touched upon corporate greed in *Raising Arizona*, *Barton Fink*, and *The Big Lebowski*, this critique took full shape with the metropolitan fantasy *The Hudsucker Proxy* (1994). The film follows a simple-minded mail clerk as he falls backwards into the role of CEO of the corporate giant Hudsucker Industries. A scathing portrayal of fat cats duping stockholders, *The Hudsucker Proxy* sets the tone for future slapstick class commentaries *Intolerable Cruelty* (2003) and *Burn after Reading* (2008). In *Intolerable Cruelty*, the Coen brothers characterize American stereotypes in a higher economic class than *Raising Arizona* and *The Big Lebowski*. The main character is a dim but successful divorce attorney, and his obsession with a vindictive, gold-digging divorcée costs him dearly. *Intolerable Cruelty* places silly people in high places, and assigns each wealthy fool a metaphorical plank from which to jump as the compulsory murder plot comes tragically undone.

Burn after Reading accomplishes a similar critique, but this outlandish vision of modern urban America adds a more diverse selection of pay grades. Adultery and financial tensions abound among personal trainers, CIA officials, a treasury agent, and a pediatrician. And, as usual with the Coen brothers, the punishment is death. This trend is perhaps their most consistent and effective, contributing to their commentary on the social circles they explore. With strange and shocking depictions of past and present American lifestyles, the films of the Coen brothers offer us alternative and penetrating views of our not-so-everyday lives.

See also: *Fargo*; *No Country for Old Men*

Selected Filmography

True Grit (2010); *A Serious Man* (2009); *Burn after Reading* (2008); *No Country for Old Men* (2007); *The Ladykillers* (2004); *Intolerable Cruelty* (2003); *The Man Who Wasn't There* (2001); *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* (2000); *The Big Lebowski* (1998); *Fargo* (1996); *The Hudsucker Proxy* (1994); *Barton Fink* (1991); *Raising Arizona* (1987); *Blood Simple* (1984)

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—Adam Dean

COLBERT, CLAUDETTE. Born in Paris on September 13, 1903, Claudette Colbert was one of Hollywood's highest-paid actresses in the 1930s. She began her screen career in 1927, playing Mary in Frank Capra's *For the Love of Mike*, her only silent film. She made 35 movies in the 1930s and 17 in the 1940s, winning an Oscar in 1935 for *It Happened One Night*. Between 1950 and 1990, she made twelve films and appeared in numerous TV series, winning a Golden Globe in 1988 for *The Two Mrs. Grenvilles*, her last film. In 1934, she starred in three films nominated for Best Picture: *Cleopatra*, *Imitation of Life*, and *It Happened One Night*. In addition to acting in film, Colbert also appeared on the stage between 1919 and 1985; she was nominated for a Tony in 1958 for her role in *The Marriage Go-Round*.

Directed by Capra, *It Happened One Night* (1934) showcased Colbert's comedic talent. Paired with Clark Gable, Colbert plays Ellie Andrews, a rebellious socialite who is engaged to be married to a fortune hunter her father cannot abide. She escapes her father's control by literally jumping ship (the family yacht) in Miami. A madcap romance ensues between Ellie and Peter Warne (Gable), a reporter she meets on the bus to New York, where she plans to reunite with her husband. The risqué hitchhiking scene in which Colbert lifts the hem of her dress to attract a passing motorist after she and Gable are stranded by the side of the road would have been impossible under MPAA scrutiny had that agency enforced 1930 production codes. Indeed, Colbert herself protested the unladylike display of her lower extremity, but when confronted with the chorus girl brought in to double for her, she reportedly said, "Get her out of here. I'll do it. That's not my leg!" At the time of its release, a *New York Times* movie review touted *It Happened One Night* as offering "a welter of improbable incidents" and claimed that "these hectic doings serve to generate plenty of laughter." According to the reviewer, "Colbert [gives] an engaging and lively performance" (Hall, 1934).

Nominated in 1945 for the Best Actress Oscar for *Since You Went Away* (1944), Colbert lost to Ingrid Bergman, who won for her role in *Gaslight*; nevertheless, this is arguably Colbert's most memorable film. In a dramatic role, rather than the comedic ones in which she was usually cast, Colbert plays Anne Hilton, a soldier's wife who keeps things together on the home front (overseeing two children, a maid, a taciturn elderly colonel, a pseudo uncle, and a bulldog) while waiting for her husband's return. Confronting the harsh realities of war (Anne's husband is reported missing and her oldest daughter's fiancé is killed in battle), Colbert offers audiences reassurance through her strength and wisdom, passion and dignity. Originally reluctant to play the role of the mother of teenage daughters, Colbert agreed after Hedda Hopper and David O. Selznick persuaded her it was an important part. As it turned out, she was so convincing in the role that in 2006, critics declared her to be the "perfect choice to embody America's homeland spirit during WWII" (Sarvady, 2006).

Returning to the screen after a 25-year absence, Colbert took on the role of Alice Grenville, widowed mother-in-law of Ann (Ann-Margret), the social-climbing chorus girl who marries (and murders) Alice's son William, in the TV drama *The Two Mrs. Grenvilles* (1987). "While much is lost" in this adaptation of Dominick Dunne's 1985 novel, it is "an intriguing portrait of the rich and powerful closing ranks to protect themselves from outsiders. The well-connected Alice knows precisely which political and journalistic buttons to push when favors are needed" (O'Connor). Like Alice Grenville, Colbert knew how to push buttons, winning the Golden Globe for Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role in a Series, Mini-Series or Motion Picture Made for TV at the age of 85.

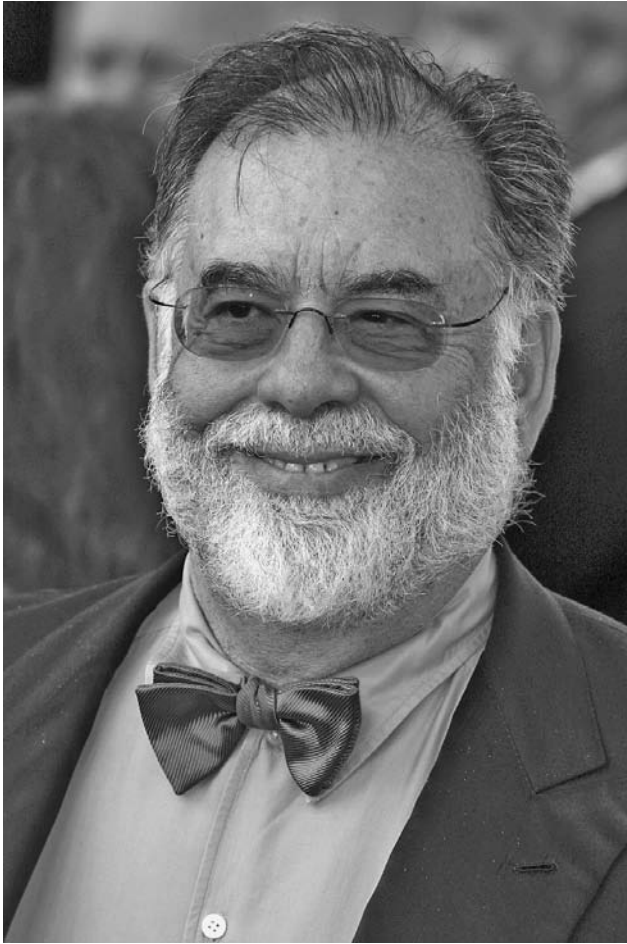
After suffering a series of strokes, Colbert died in Speightstown, Barbados, on July 30, 1996.

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—Robin L. Cadwallader

COPPOLA, FRANCIS FORD. Francis Ford Coppola is one of the few Hollywood directors to have earned auteur status. His reputation has largely been built on the foundation of a number of films that he directed and wrote in the 1970s, particularly the first two *Godfather* films and *Apocalypse Now* (1979).



Director Francis Ford Coppola arrives for the screening of the film *Marie-Antoinette*, in Cannes, on Wednesday, May 24, 2006. (AP/Wide World Photos)

Coppola was born in Detroit on April 7, 1939, although he grew up in Queens, New York. He became interested in theater while recovering from polio when he was 10 and began writing plays six years later. While attending Hofstra University, he directed and wrote scripts for stage productions that were performed by the institution's student theater group. After discovering the work of Russian filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein, Coppola shifted his focus to the cinema. Finishing his BA in 1960, Coppola continued his studies at UCLA and soon began working with the producer and director Roger Corman. Among Coppola's responsibilities while working with Corman was helping to prepare the script for the English version of the Russian film *Nebo zowet* (1959), which appeared in the United States as *Battle beyond the Sun* (1963), and serving as the sound engineer on *The Young Racers* (1963). He was also given the chance to direct his own film, the horror flick *Dementia 13* (1963), while in Ireland working on *The Young Racers*.

Coppola then entered the screenplay for *Pilma*, *Pilma* in the competition for the UCLA Samuel Goldwyn Award and, upon winning, was hired to write for Seven Arts. Leaving UCLA, he wrote a number of scripts over the next few years. None of them made it to the screen, at least as he had conceived them, and he was fired, along with Gore Vidal, for the disaster *Is Paris Burning?* (1966). Coppola's big break came with *You're a Big Boy Now* (1966), a widely praised film that he wrote and directed and that UCLA accepted as his master's thesis in 1968. He would go on to direct *Finian's Rainbow* (1968) and *The Rain People* (1969), which was sound-mixed at American Zoetrope, an independent production house that Coppola set up in San Francisco in order to gain some freedom from the major studios. He also earned accolades at this time for his studio work and won an Oscar for his part in crafting the script for Twentieth Century-Fox's *Patton* (1970).

The first film entirely produced by Zoetrope was George Lucas's *THX 1138* (1971), a futuristic tale that nearly broke the company. The follow-up was Coppola's masterpiece, *The Godfather* (1972). Based on Mario Puzo's best-selling Mafia novel of the same name, *The Godfather* was co-scripted by Puzo and Coppola. The film turned Coppola into a legend, stabilized Zoetrope, and won a slew of Oscars, including those for Best Picture, Best Actor for Marlon Brando, and Best Screenplay Based on Material from Another Medium. Coppola went on to release *The Conversation* in 1974—a mystery that he produced, wrote, and directed, and that won the Grand Prix International prize at the Cannes Film Festival—and *The Godfather, Part II*, once again writing the screenplay with Puzo. Winning Academy Awards for Best Picture and Best Screenplay Based on Material from Another Medium, as its predecessor had, *The Godfather, Part II* also earned Coppola the Oscar for Best Director. Significantly, he would not release another film for five years, largely due to turmoil on the set of *Apocalypse Now*, the Vietnam War epic adapted from Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899) that Coppola directed, produced, and co-wrote, and for which he won the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival.

Soon after finishing *Apocalypse*, Coppola produced the children's movie *The Black Stallion* (1979) and teamed up with George Lucas to serve as executive producer on Akira Kurosawa's *Kagemusha* (1980). Over the following years, Coppola directed and/or wrote a number of mostly unmemorable films, including *One from the Heart* (1982), *The Escape Artist* (1982), *Hammett* (1983), *The Outsiders* (1983), *Rumble Fish* (1983), *The Cotton Club* (1984), and *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters* (1985). He seemed to get back on track with *Peggy Sue Got Married* (1986), a story about a housewife in her forties who travels back to the end of her high school senior year, but this film was followed by another string of less-than-successful projects, including *Gardens of Stone* (1987) and the biopic *Tucker: The Man and His Dream* (1988).

By the end of the 1980s, Coppola, after having refused to do so for years, agreed to make a third *Godfather* film, hoping to inject needed funds into his struggling production company. He again co-wrote the screenplay with Puzo and directed, but *Godfather, Part III* (1990) proved less successful than the previous two films, earning only the disdain of the critics and an adequate audience. Coppola then directed *Dracula* (1992), which received numerous negative reviews but found success at the box office, as the public responded to the visually stunning retelling of the vampire story. Although Coppola's next directorial efforts—the comedy *Jack* (1996) and *John Grisham's The Rainmaker* (1997), for which he wrote the script—extended *Dracula's* success, his *Youth without Youth* (2007), another film that he wrote and directed, proved to be his poorest-performing picture, grossing less than \$250,000 domestically. Even though his record as a director has been spotty since the halcyon days of the 1970s, the respect that Coppola has earned in the film industry has allowed him to continue to make films with studio support.

Selected Filmography

Tetro (2009); *Youth without Youth* (2007); *The Rainmaker* (1997); *Jack* (1996); *Dracula* (1992); *The Godfather: Part III* (1990); *Tucker: The Man and His Dream* (1988); *Gardens of Stone*

(1987); *Peggy Sue Got Married* (1986); *The Cotton Club* (1984); *Rumble Fish* (1983); *The Outsiders* (1983); *One from the Heart* (1982); *Apocalypse Now* (1979); *The Godfather: Part II* (1974); *The Conversation* (1974); *The Godfather* (1972); *The Rain People* (1969); *Finian's Rainbow* (1968); *You're a Big Boy Now* (1966); *Dementia 13* (1963); *The Bellboy and the Playgirls* (1962); *Battle beyond the Sun* (1960)

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—Albert Rolls

CORMAN, ROGER. Known in the film industry as “King of the B-movie,” Roger Corman has been working as a producer and director since the 1950s. His longevity is the result of his ability to balance filmmaking’s creative aspects with the financial bottom line. Although he has worked primarily in the straight-to-video/DVD market for some time, his influence is as far-reaching and intensely felt as ever.

Corman was born in Detroit to Ann and William Corman, on April 5, 1926. William, an engineer, was a frugal man who saved enough to retire at 43 and move his family to California. Like his father, Roger also studied engineering (at Stanford), but wanted a career in Hollywood. After graduating, he took several jobs until he was able to parlay a position as a literary agent into film work (McGee, 1996).

His rise to prominence is inseparable from that of American International Pictures. With the release of *The Fast and the Furious* (1954), for which he provided the story and produced, Corman became one of the company’s in-house directors churning out low-budget, teen-oriented genre pictures throughout the 1950s and ’60s. While most major studios were struggling to bring in audiences after the advent of television, Corman and AIP were able to attract young, drive-in theater audiences by feeding them a steady diet of horror and science fiction fare (Palmer, Del Valle, and Biodrowski, 1998).

The traits of determination and frugality that Corman inherited from his father made him an ideal fit for AIP, which was always interested in getting the most bang for its buck—and no one was better at making “art” out of “schlock” than Roger Corman. Working hyper-efficiently with eager young talent, he was almost always able to bring his films in on time, and sometimes even under budget (Corman 1990). One-week shoots, single takes, and even recycled sets and footage were all commonplace with Corman films. The overt social commentary, *The Intruder* (1962), was an exception to his usual approach; he even put up his own money for lack of other financing. The *Twilight Zone*-style parable about American racism starred a young William Shatner and was shot on location in Missouri under threat of violence from locals. Despite positive critical reception, the film failed at the box office. It remains one of Corman’s most personal and palatable films.

Although a progressive sensibility is evident in many of Corman's films, he is still most recognized for lowbrow pictures such as *The Day the World Ended*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, and the Edgar Allan Poe adaptations that featured Vincent Price. He did, however, also direct two serious examinations of '60s counterculture for AIP before leaving the company over editorial conflicts. *The Wild Angels* (1966), a nihilistic depiction of life among a motorcycle gang, displayed graphic violence and sexuality. The film offered clear evidence of the loosening of the Production Code during the '60s, a phenomenon also signaled by the release of studio pictures such as *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1966) and *The Graduate* (1967) (Williams, 2008). Significantly, *The Wild Angels* starred Peter Fonda and Dennis Hopper. Corman's *The Trip* (1967), one of the first American films to address explicitly LSD use, was written by Jack Nicholson and also featured Fonda and Dennis Hopper; all three counterculture icons would appear in the cult classic *Easy Rider* (1967).

Corman directed the gangster film *The St. Valentine's Day Massacre* (1971) for Twentieth Century-Fox, but found his style incompatible with big-studio filmmaking. He formed his own production company, New World Pictures, in 1971. Although he did direct sporadically between the 1970s and the 1990s, most of his attention over the past 40 years has been focused on the nearly 400 films he has produced. Despite this prodigious achievement, Corman's greatest legacy may still turn out to be how influential he was in launching the careers of such important American directors as Martin Scorsese, Ron Howard, Francis Ford Coppola, Jonathan Demme, John Sayles, and Peter Bogdanovich (Silver and Ursini, 2006).

Selected Filmography

Frankenstein Unbound (1990); *Battle Beyond the Stars* (1980); *Deathsport* (1978); *Von Richthofen and Brown* (1971); *Gas! . . .* (1970); *Bloody Mama* (1970); *The Trip* (1967); *The St. Valentine's Day Massacre* (1967); *The Wild Angels* (1966); *The Tomb of Ligeia* (1964); *The Secret Invasion* (1964); *The Masque of the Red Death* (1964); *The Terror* (1963); *The Raven* (1963); *Tower of London* (1962); *Tales of Terror* (1962); *Premature Burial* (1962); *Pit and the Pendulum* (1961); *The Little Shop of Horrors* (1960); *House of Usher* (1960); *A Bucket of Blood* (1959); *Machine-Gun Kelly* (1958); *Gunslinger* (1956); *Day the World Ended* (1955); *Apache Woman* (1955); *Five Guns West* (1955); *Swamp Women* (1955)

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—Mikal Gaines

COSTNER, KEVIN. Kevin Costner has appeared in over 40 movies, and, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, became one of the film industry's biggest box-office draws. Interestingly, although he has been disparaged by film critics for his lack of talent as an actor, he has remained widely popular with film audiences. Critics have been much kinder in regard to his abilities as a director, however, and Costner is considered by many to be an artist behind the camera.

Born in Lynwood, California, on January 18, 1955, Costner was not initially drawn to a career in acting. A sports star in high school, he turned down a basketball scholarship to play baseball at California State University, Fullerton, where he majored in business. It was only on a chance meeting in an airplane with Richard Burton that Costner decided to quit his job and move to Hollywood. He found a few bit parts in the early 1980s, eventually winning the role of Alex in Lawrence Kasdan's *The Big Chill* (1983). Unfortunately for Costner, his scenes were left on the cutting-room floor (he appears as the corpse at the beginning of the film). He made an impression on Kasdan, however, and two years later the director cast him in his western *Silverado* (1985). Costner played Jake, the wild and impulsive younger brother of the Scott Glenn character, Emmett. The film did well at the box office, and audiences liked the Costner character; he also appeared in two other films released in 1985: *American Flyers* and *Fandango*. The films that followed in the 1980s, *The Untouchables* (1987) and *No Way Out* (1987), would solidify the actor's popularity with audiences. In the former, written by David Mamet, Costner was cast as federal agent Elliot Ness, opposite Sean Connery and Robert De Niro; in the latter film, a military thriller, he stars as a young naval officer wrongfully accused of murder.

As the 1980s came to a close, Costner went on to make two sports films that did extremely well at the box office, eventually becoming cult classics. The first was *Bull Durham* (1988), a romantic comedy, with Susan Sarandon, about an aging minor league baseball player and his exploits with a pitching phenom, played by Tim Robbins. (Sarandon and Robbins met and fell in love on the set of *Bull Durham* although they never married, they lived together for years before finally ending their romantic relationship). The second film was an adaptation of W. P. Kinsella's novel *Shoeless Joe* entitled *Field of Dreams* (1989). In this picture, Ray Kinsella, played by Costner, hears voices that prompt him to build a baseball field on his Iowa farm in order to resurrect the ghosts of the game's past, including his own deceased father. Costner played a baseball veteran twice more, in *For Love of the Game* (1999) and *The Upside of Anger* (2005), and a golf-pro in *Tin Cup* (1996).

In 1990, Costner directed his masterpiece, the epic western *Dances with Wolves*, a tale of a Civil War lieutenant who is stationed on the American frontier and encounters a tribe of Sioux Indians. While it has been criticized as overly romantic, idealizing the

Sioux or perhaps even the landscape itself, the film, which depicts the beauty of Native American life and the tragedy of white expansionism, served as an important cinematic step toward deconstructing traditional westerns and their Eurocentric sensibilities. *Dances with Wolves* won seven Academy Awards, including Best Picture and Best Director. Costner would go on to work on two other epics, the futuristic pictures *Waterworld* (1995) and *The Postman* (1997), the latter directed by Costner, both of which were savaged by critics and failed miserably at the box office. Proving that he was still popular with audiences, though, Costner starred in such films as *JFK* (1991), *The Bodyguard* (1992), Clint Eastwood's *A Perfect World* (1993), and *Thirteen Days in October*, all of which did well commercially. Although he seems to struggle with complex roles, such as those he was required to play in *JFK* and *Thirteen Days in October*, Costner appears much better suited to roles in which he plays laconic characters, such as those in *The Bodyguard* and *A Perfect World*.



A fan favorite, Kevin Costner has starred in such popular films as *Field of Dreams*, *Bull Durham*, and *JFK*. (AP/Wide World Photos)

Despite some critical and commercial decline in recent years, Costner has continued to show bright spots, such as his portrayal of hired gun Charley Waite in the western *Open Range* (2003), which he directed. He also scored with audiences playing the terse, methodical, antihero serial killer in *Mr. Brooks* (2007).

Selected Filmography

Mr. Brooks (2007); *The Guardian* (2006); *The Upside of Anger* (2005); *Open Range* (2003); *Dragonfly* (2002); *3000 Miles to Graceland* (2001); *Thirteen Days* (2000); *For Love of the Game* (1999); *Mesage in a Bottle* (1999); *The Postman* (1997); *Tin Cup* (1996); *Waterworld* (1995); *The War* (1994); *Wyatt Earp* (1994); *A Perfect World* (1993); *The Bodyguard* (1992); *JFK* (1991); *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* (1991); *Dances with Wolves* (1990); *Field of Dreams* (1989); *The Gunrunner* (1989); *Bull Durham* (1988); *No Way Out* (1987); *The Untouchables* (1987); *Silverado* (1985)

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—K. A. Wisniewski

CUKOR, GEORGE. George Cukor was a Hollywood director from 1930 to 1981. Considered Hollywood’s quintessential actor’s director, he was also known as Hollywood’s quintessential “woman’s director,” a reference to the fact that he was especially prized by many of Hollywood’s leading actresses and also to his open (at least in Hollywood) homosexuality. With a remarkable number of classic pictures to his credit—such as *Dinner at Eight* (1933), *Camille* (1936), *The Women* (1939), *The Philadelphia Story* (1940), and *My Fair Lady* (1964)—Cukor earned his reputation as a filmmaker who confronted American attitudes toward class and gender differences while maintaining an air of sophistication, wit, and urbanity.

Of Hungarian extraction, George Dewey Cukor was born in New York City on July 7, 1899. From 1920 to 1929, he worked extensively in the New York theater community, directing original productions of works such as *The Great Gatsby* (1925) and *Gypsy* (1929) on Broadway. When sound technology took over the movies in the late 1920s, Hollywood looked to Broadway for artists to ease the transition, and in 1929, Cukor was lured west to serve as a dialogue director. He soon began directing, and beginning in 1932, released a series of films starring Constance Bennett: *Rockabye*, *What Price Hollywood?*, and *Our Betters* (1933). In 1933, he adapted the George S. Kaufman and Edna Ferber hit play *Dinner at Eight*, which became a classic for star Jean Harlow. Many of Cukor’s future successes were based on theatrical material, such as *Romeo and Juliet* (1936), *Gaslight* (1944), and *A Double Life* (1947).

From the early *What Price Hollywood?* to *A Double Life*, *The Actress* (1953), *A Star is Born* (1954), and *Les Girls* (1957), Cukor focused much of his work on the lives of theatrical and cinematic performers. *A Double Life* is perhaps his darkest examination of the difficulty of earning a living as a professional actor. Ronald Colman stars as an actor unable to separate his offstage and onstage life, which results in tragedy.

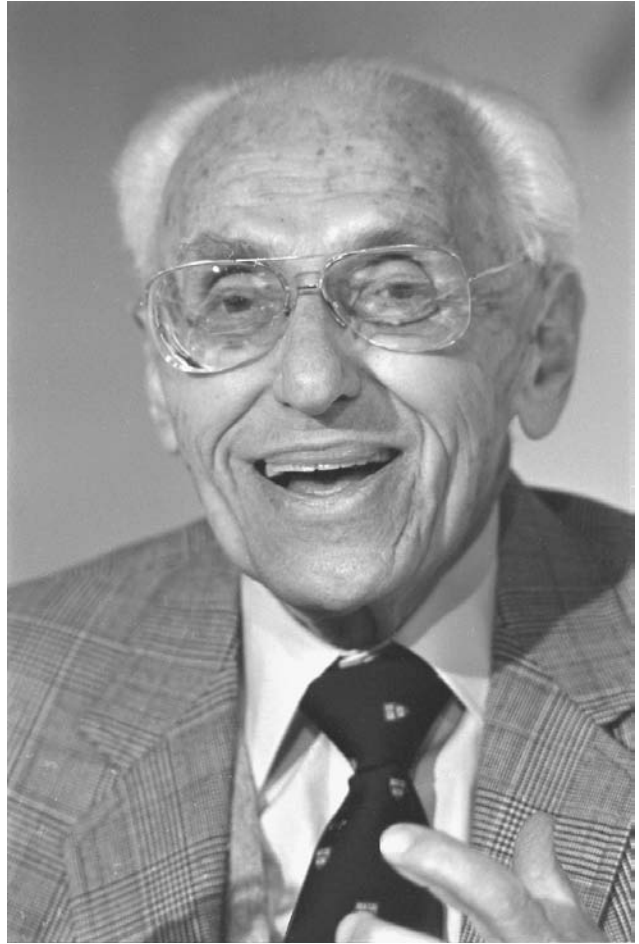
Another consistent anxiety for characters in Cukor’s films results from the demands placed on them to behave according to socially defined gender categories. In this light, it is no coincidence that Cukor developed a close bond with star Katharine Hepburn. He cast Hepburn in her first film role in *A Bill of Divorcement* (1932), about a woman who relinquishes the possibility of marriage in favor of taking care of her father as he descends into madness. The pair would make 10 films together over almost five decades, including 1933’s huge box-office hit *Little Women*. *Sylvia Scarlett* (1936), a film that was embraced by the *Cahiers du cinéma* critics in the late 1960s, tells the story of a girl who poses as a boy. It features several scenes that suggest Sylvia’s ambiguous

attitude toward her gender identity, as well as the confusion that results for the men who desire her when she appears as “Sylvester.” *Adam’s Rib* (1949) pits Hepburn against partner Spencer Tracy in a tale of married lawyers on opposing sides of a court case that hinges on issues informing the battle of the sexes. Another Tracy/Hepburn vehicle, *Pat and Mike* (1952), is a romantic comedy about a pants-wearing woman (Hepburn) who expertly plays a multitude of sports. Other Cukor films starring Hepburn include *Holiday* (1938), *The Philadelphia Story*, and *The Corn Is Green* (1979), a made-for-television movie about a Welsh schoolteacher.

Cukor’s reputation for evoking quality performances from his actresses was not just a product of his collaborations with Hepburn. He directed Greta Garbo in one of her best films, *Camille*, and worked for two years preparing (and directing a substantial portion of) the women-centered *Gone with the Wind* (1939); and after being replaced on that pic-

ture by Victor Fleming (at the request of star Clark Gable), he chose to make a film without a single male actor: *The Women* (1939). In the 1950s, Cukor made a succession of films starring comic talent Judy Holliday. In 1954, he drew out what is perhaps Judy Garland’s best performance in *A Star Is Born*. Ten years later, Cukor won an Oscar for directing another musical, the classic *My Fair Lady*.

Cukor died on January 23, 1983, at his home in Los Angeles.



Portrait of Oscar-winning film director George Cukor during an interview on January 14, 1982, in Paris. (AP/Wide World Photos)

Selected Filmography

Rich and Famous (1981); *The Blue Bird* (1976); *Travels with My Aunt* (1972); *Justine* (1969); *My Fair Lady* (1964); *The Chapman Report* (1962); *Something’s Got to Give* (1962); *Let’s Make Love* (1960); *Heller in Pink Tights* (1960); *Wild Is the Wind* (1957); *Les Girls* (1957); *Bhowani*

Junction (1956); *A Star Is Born* (1954); *It Should Happen to You* (1954); *The Actress* (1953); *Pat and Mike* (1952); *The Marrying Kind* (1952); *The Model and the Marriage Broker* (1951); *Born Yesterday* (1950); *A Life of Her Own* (1950); *Adam's Rib* (1949); *Edward, My Son* (1949); *A Double Life* (1947); *Winged Victory* (1944); *Gaslight* (1944); *Resistance and Ohm's Law* (1943); *Keeper of the Flame* (1942); *Her Cardboard Lover* (1942); *Two-Faced Woman* (1941); *A Woman's Face* (1941); *The Philadelphia Story* (1940); *Susan and God* (1940); *The Women* (1939); *Zaza* (1938); *Holiday* (1938); *Camille* (1936); *Romeo and Juliet* (1936); *Sylvia Scarlett* (1935); *David Copperfield* (1935); *Little Women* (1933); *Dinner at Eight* (1933); *Our Betters* (1933); *A Bill of Divorcement* (1932); *What Price Hollywood?* (1932); *Tarnished Lady* (1931); *The Virtuous Sin* (1930)

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—Kyle Stevens

CURTIZ, MICHAEL. Michael Curtiz, born in Hungary on December 24, 1886, as Manó Kertész Kaminer, immigrated to the United States in 1926, and would go on to direct over 100 films in Hollywood. Like so many of his émigré colleagues, he brought to Hollywood considerable experience from the European film industry. Curtiz had worked sparingly in Hungary and Denmark in the 1910s, but spent the bulk of his time working in Austria for Sascha Films, directing more than 20 films from 1919 to 1926. *Moon of Israel* (1924) was noticed by Jack Warner, who recruited Curtiz to remake the film for Warner Bros. as *Noah's Ark* (1928).

From 1926 to 1954, Curtiz directed 88 films for Warner Bros., “probably a record for one man’s direction of features at a single studio” (Meyer 1978). Highlights of his Warner Bros. work include a series of action-adventure films starring Errol Flynn and Olivia de Havilland in the mid- to late 1930s, most notably *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938); the George M. Cohan biopic *Yankee Doodle Dandy* (1941), which netted James Cagney his only Academy Award; Joan Crawford’s comeback film *Mildred Pierce* (1945); and *Casablanca* (1942), the Hollywood classic that many have described as an “accidental masterpiece.”

Curtiz’s most popular pictures, *Yankee Doodle Dandy* and *Casablanca*, exploit a timely connection to World War II. In both films, a struggle between the conflicting demands of individual interest and national service is dramatized. Humphrey Bogart’s Rick, a café owner in the colonial city, claims no interest in politics—“I stick my neck out for nobody,” he repeatedly declares. The selfishness and bravado of *Yankee’s* Cohan as a young prodigy threatens to undermine his career. By the end, though, the star protagonists come down firmly on the side of sacrifice for the country. Rick forgoes his personal interests for the greater good when he helps his love interest, Ilsa (Ingrid Bergman), to flee safely with Resistance leader Victor Laszlo (Paul Henreid), while Cohan overcomes his self-aggrandizing tendencies to pen patriotic songs that served the national morale in both World Wars.

Curtiz was also the most prolific director of the musical biopic, popular studio fare during the 1940s and '50s. During his time with Warner Bros., in addition to *Yankee Doodle Dandy*, Curtiz directed Cary Grant as a straight Cole Porter in *Night and Day* (1946) and Kirk Douglas as a jazz prodigy resembling Bix Beiderbecke in *Young Man with a Horn* (1950). He also remade *The Jazz Singer* in 1952 and directed *The Helen Morgan Story* in 1957.

The fact that the musical biopic is considered more a producer's than a director's genre fits Curtiz's reputation as a cooperative studio-era director. As opposed to many of his more difficult contemporaries, Curtiz welcomed the collaborative efficiency of studio-era filmmaking, ceding creative control to producers and other technical staff whenever necessary. After his relationship with Warner Bros. disintegrated in the mid-1950s, Curtiz, characteristic of this phase of Hollywood history, worked according to the "package-unit" system, by "short-term film-by-film arrangement" (Bordwell, Staiger, and Thompson, 1985). He would make 15 more films for a variety of studios before he died of cancer on April 10, 1962, but found the new, more star-driven Hollywood less conducive to quality filmmaking than the studio era. In an interview during this period, Curtiz lamented the state of his industry, complaining that the greed of "unions and stars" was "destroying the wonderful machine that was—and still is—Hollywood" (Meyer, 1978, 101).

Selected Filmography

The Comancheros (1961); *Francis of Assisi* (1961); *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1960); *A Breath of Scandal* (1960); *The Man in the Net* (1959); *The Hangman* (1959); *King Creole* (1958); *The Proud Rebel* (1958); *The Helen Morgan Story* (1957); *We're No Angels* (1955); *White Christmas* (1954); *The Egyptian* (1954); *The Boy from Oklahoma* (1954); *Trouble along the Way* (1953); *The Jazz Singer* (1952); *The Story of Will Rogers* (1952); *I'll See You in My Dreams* (1951); *Jim Thorpe—All-American* (1951); *Force of Arms* (1951); *The Breaking Point* (1950); *Bright Leaf* (1950); *Young Man with a Horn* (1950); *Flamingo Road* (1949); *The Unsuspected* (1947); *Life with Father* (1947); *Night and Day* (1946); *Mildred Pierce* (1945); *Roughly Speaking* (1945); *Janie* (1944); *Passage to Marseille* (1944); *This Is the Army* (1943); *Mission to Moscow* (1943); *Casablanca* (1942); *Yankee Doodle Dandy* (1942); *Captains of the Clouds* (1942); *Dive Bomber* (1941); *The Sea Wolf* (1941); *Santa Fe Trail* (1940); *The Sea Hawk* (1940); *Virginia City* (1940); *Four Wives* (1939); *Essex and Elizabeth* (1939); *Daughters Courageous* (1939); *Dodge City* (1939); *Angels with Dirty Faces* (1938); *Four Daughters* (1938); *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938); *Kid Galahad* (1937); *The Charge of the Light Brigade* (1936); *The Walking Dead* (1936); *Captain Blood* (1935); *The Case of the Curious Bride* (1935); *Black Fury* (1935); *Mandalay* (1934); *Female* (1933); *The Kennel Murder Case* (1933); *Mystery of the Wax Museum* (1933); *20,000 Years in Sing Sing* (1932); *Doctor X* (1932); *Noah's Ark* (1928)

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—Jesse Schlotterbeck

DEMILLE, CECIL B. Cecil B. DeMille's films resonated with audiences wrestling with contemporary changes in 1900s American society. As one of very few producer/directors who used silent-film-era successes to transition into a new era of sound, he made a total of 70 movies between 1913 and 1956. DeMille's evolution from anonymity to fame was in large part propelled by his ability both to express and to question themes within American culture. These changes, occurring within a populace rent by contending visions of society's present and future are embedded in each of DeMille's films.

Born August 12, 1881, in Ashfield, Massachusetts, DeMille enrolled at New York City's Academy of Dramatic Arts, becoming a moderately successful playwright. In 1913, he and his friend Jesse L. Lasky formed the Jesse L. Lasky Feature Play Company, and DeMille began his career as a director and producer. After producing 24 films, the Lasky company merged with Famous Players in 1916, and created a profitable nine-year association that resulted in the production of 28 additional silent pictures. Successful films such as Lasky's *The Squaw Man* (1914, 1931) and *The Virginian* (1914) helped to propel moving pictures into the spotlight of American culture, creating a popular audience and spurring businessmen to invest in the industry.

Perhaps most significantly for DeMille, films like *The Cheat* (1915), *Old Wives for New* (1918), *The King of Kings* (1927), and *The Ten Commandments* (1956) addressed the growing tension between traditional religious values and the values of a new consumer culture. Boldly using high budgets, new lighting techniques, and a blend of the sexual and the religious, DeMille earned a reputation as the "Great Showman," or "Master of Spectacle," even before the advent of sound and color in filmmaking. Astute viewers began to recognize that beneath his showmanship, however, lurked a cinematic critique of early twentieth-century consumer culture. In *The Cheat* (1915), for example, DeMille explored the fall from grace of a society woman who gambles away Red Cross money. In religious epics such as *The Sign of the Cross* (1932) and *Samson and Delilah* (1949), DeMille emphasized Christian religious values in the same moment that he titillated audiences with nude scenes and sexual situations. The inclusion of unpredictable scenes that displayed nudity, wealth, and physical desires in



Cecil B. DeMille sits on his lawn at his home in Hollywood on June 19, 1956. (AP/Wide World Photos)

biblical films and in *Cleopatra* presented to viewers modern moral issues clearly exposed against the backdrop of an ancient setting. They also benefited, however, from DeMille's strict attention to historical detail, as evidenced in *Cleopatra* and *The Ten Commandments*. He believed historical accuracy to be of the greatest importance to a film's integrity, and sought to create innovative films that creatively fit within a historical model rather than existing outside of historical truth.

Often considered a great entertainer and remembered for "bathtub" scenes awash with sexual connotation, DeMille's strengths and skills as an influential, thought-provoking director have at times been overlooked. Having won only one Academy Award throughout his long and very successful career, for *The Greatest Show on Earth*, he was awarded three Oscars in the 1950s, almost as an afterthought

for his achievements. In the end, though, his ability to blend the past and the present in popular and thought-provoking films made DeMille one of the most significant figures in the history of American cinema. He died on January 21, 1959, in Hollywood.

Selected Filmography

The Ten Commandments (1956); *The Greatest Show on Earth* (1952); *Samson and Delilah* (1949); *Unconquered* (1947); *The Story of Dr. Wassell* (1944); *Reap the Wild Wind* (1942); *Union Pacific* (1939); *The Buccaneer* (1938); *The Plainsman* (1936); *The Crusades* (1935); *Cleopatra* (1934); *Four Frightened People* (1934); *This Day and Age* (1933); *The Sign of the Cross* (1932); *The Squaw Man* (1931); *Madam Satan* (1930); *Dynamite* (1929); *The Godless Girl* (1929); *Walking Back* (1928); *The King of Kings* (1927); *The Volga Boatman* (1926); *The Golden Bed* (1925); *Feet of Clay* (1924); *The Ten Commandments* (1923); *Adam's Rib* (1923); *Manslaughter* (1922); *Fool's Paradise* (1921); *Why Change Your Wife?* (1920); *Male and Female* (1919); *Don't Change Your Husband* (1919); *The Squaw Man* (1918); *The Devil-Stone* (1917); *The Woman*

God Forgot (1917); *Joan the Woman* (1916); *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine* (1916); *Temptation* (1915); *The Cheat* (1915); *Carmen* (1915); *The Arab* (1915); *The Girl of the Golden West* (1915); *The Ghost Breaker* (1914); *The Virginian* (1914); *The Squaw Man* (1914)

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—Sarah Bischoff

DE NIRO, ROBERT. One of the most respected actors in the American cinema, much of Robert De Niro's success can be attributed to his collaborations with director Martin Scorsese. Known for his shy and self-effacing manner, De Niro has never made for an easy or particularly riveting interview. His on-screen intensity, however, helps account for his psychologically complex and gripping portrayals of outsiders populating the fringes of society. At his most subtle, De Niro captures the spirit of youth, rebellion, and alienation that figure prominently in New Hollywood cinema. At its most extreme, De Niro's embodiment of marginality has resulted in some of the screen's most violent and frightening outcasts.

Robert De Niro was born in New York City on August 17, 1943. The son of artists, he quit high school, and settled on the idea of becoming an actor at the tender age of 17. In the early 1960s, he pursued his ambition by studying Method acting under Stella Adler at the Conservatory of Acting at the New School. Several of his earliest screen roles came in films by director Brian De Palma: *Greetings* (1968), *The Wedding Party* (1969) and *Hi, Mom!* (1970). Much later, he would star as Al Capone in De Palma's *The Untouchables* (1987), well after they had both become famous.

Significantly, De Niro's partnership with Scorsese has resulted in many of his most iconic and enduring screen performances. Together, De Niro and Scorsese have contributed highly stylized images of the ethnic-American experience while exploring the complex dynamics of urbanity, organized crime, and Catholic and Jewish guilt. In 1973, De Niro starred as Johnny Boy in Scorsese's *Mean Streets*, a film that would prefigure a commitment to an examination of complex cultural themes in a number of the duo's most well-received films, including *Raging Bull* (1980), *Goodfellas* (1990), and *Casino* (1995). Interestingly, although directed by Francis Ford Coppola, his role in *The Godfather II* (1974), for which he won an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor, was an important marker of his on-screen exploration of Italian American identity.

It may be argued that it was De Niro's realistic and nuanced portrayal of a delusional Vietnam War veteran-turned-cab-driver in Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* (1976) that would make both of them household names. As Travis Bickle, De Niro gave audiences both a highly disturbing glimpse of urban alienation, and one of Hollywood's most well-known and oft-repeated expressions: "Are you talkin' to me?" Another important film that De Niro starred in during this period was Michael Cimino's *The Deer Hunter* (1978). Playing Michael, an angst-ridden war veteran, De Niro captured the anguish of post-Vietnam-era America.

Heavily influenced by Adler's emphasis on physical transformation, De Niro stunned audiences with his portrayal of Jake La Motta in Scorsese's *Raging Bull*. In order to shoot the scenes when La Motta is at his fighting best, De Niro first forced his body into rock-hard physical condition; once those scenes were completed, Scorsese shut down production for four months so De Niro could eat his way across Europe and gain the 60 pounds he needed to add to his frame in order to portray the older, fallen La Motta. De Niro's profoundly unsettling performance in *Raging Bull* ultimately earned him the Academy Award for Best Actor.

De Niro's great versatility as an actor is suggested by his willingness to accept roles in films of divergent genres. He starred in Scorsese's musical *New York, New York* (1977), for example; in Terry Gilliam's science-fiction adventure *Brazil* (1985); in Roland Joffé's period piece *The Mission* (1986); and in the partially animated *The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle* (2000). De Niro also channeled his well-established screen persona as a tough guy for parodic effect in the DreamWorks animation picture *Shark Tale* (2004), for which he provided the voice of Don Lino, a gangster shark boss.

De Niro's various turns at comedy also convey his range as an actor. In Scorsese's darkly humorous *The King of Comedy* (1982), De Niro plays Rupert Pupkin, an aspiring stand-up comic who kidnaps a talk show host played by Jerry Lewis. Playing straight man to other actors, De Niro also appeared in the road-show comedies *Midnight Run* (1988) and *We're No Angels* (1989). More recently, he has appeared in comedic films such as *Analyze This* (1999), in which he plays a gangster undergoing psychoanalysis, and *Meet the Parents* (2000), in which he portrays an intimidating and overprotective future father-in-law intent on tormenting his daughter's fiancé. Both films spawned sequels, *Analyze That* (2002) and *Meet the Fockers* (2004), respectively, although these follow-ups were less successful than the original films.

In 1993, De Niro made his directorial debut with *A Bronx Tale* (1993). Written by and co-starring newcomer Chazz Palminteri, the film revisited a number of the issues concerning Italian American identity that De Niro and Scorsese had explored in some of their earlier films. Like Scorsese's *Mean Streets*, Palminteri's *Bronx Tale* follows the stories of neighborhood gangsters and the hardworking citizens who must share their communal space with these despicable and violent men. The film focuses on Calogero "C" Anello (played brilliantly by De Niro look-alike Lillo Brancato). The teenage son of a hardworking and honest bus driver, Lorenzo Anello (De Niro), C is torn between his loyalty to his father and what he imagines to be his respect for the neighborhood crime boss, Sonny LoSpecchio (Palminteri).

The Good Shepherd (2006), the only other film De Niro has directed, examines the origins of the CIA. Intriguingly, the film takes the viewer back in history in order to examine contemporary, post-9/11 issues regarding national intelligence. Although a much darker film, *The Good Shepherd* is consistent with De Niro's liberal politics, which have playfully materialized on the screen in the satire *Wag the Dog* (1997), in which De Niro plays a spinmeister who creates a fake war in order to divert the public's attention from a presidential sex scandal.

In 1988, De Niro branched out from acting and established Tribeca Films. He would eventually go on to organize the Tribeca Film Festival in 2002. Despite the commercial and critical failures of some of his more recent films, De Niro's legacy as a serious and gifted actor seems assured.

Selected Filmography

Machete (2010); *Everybody's Fine* (2009); *Righteous Kill* (2008); *Stardust* (2007); *Meet the Fockers* (2004); *Analyze That* (2002); *City by the Sea* (2002); *Showtime* (2002); *The Score* (2001); *15 Minutes* (2001); *Meet the Parents* (2000); *Men of Honor* (2000); *The Adventures of Rocky & Bullwinkle* (2000); *Flawless* (1999); *Analyze This* (1999); *Ronin* (1998); *Jackie Brown* (1997); *Cop Land* (1997); *Heat* (1995); *Casino* (1995); *Frankenstein* (1994); *Cape Fear* (1991); *Goodfellas* (1990); *The Untouchables* (1987); *The Mission* (1986); *Brazil* (1985); *Once Upon a Time in America* (1984); *Raging Bull* (1980); *The Deer Hunter* (1978); *New York, New York* (1977); *The Last Tycoon* (1976); *1900* (1976); *Taxi Driver* (1976); *The Godfather: Part II* (1974); *Mean Streets* (1973); *Bang the Drum Slowly* (1973); *The Gang That Couldn't Shoot Straight* (1971)

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—Linda Mokdad

DEREN, MAYA. Maya Deren is a figure in the history of cinema referred to with notable frequency as a "legend." Deren's life and work are the stuff of legend, as is well documented by her biographers in their thousand-page (unfinished) work *The Legend of Maya Deren*. At the root of this legend is Deren's first film, *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943), which set the terms for postwar American avant-garde film and remains a seminal work to this day. Indeed, in 1990, the Library of Congress acknowledged its

historical and aesthetic import, preserving it in the National Film Registry. Yet, Deren's significance extends far beyond a single film. In promoting her work, particular *Meshes*, she not only innovatively modified practices of distribution and exhibition for independent film; she also demanded that audiences and cultural institutions take film seriously as an art form. In this way, her limited catalog—a handful of short films, poetry, prose and theory, photographs and an extensive study of Vodoun culture—belies her significance in American film. Deren's aesthetic creativity in filmmaking, her writing and lectures on film art and its place in modernity, and her tireless efforts as an advocate for experimental filmmaking laid the foundation for the independent American cinema. These accomplishments are indeed legendary, especially if one considers that she died when she was only 44.

Born Eleanora Derenkowsky in Kiev, on April 29, 1917, Deren and her parents fled the anti-Semitic pogroms of the Ukraine five years later. They ultimately immigrated to the United States and shortened their name to Deren. Eleanora attended the League of Nations' International School, and then matriculated at Syracuse University. After graduating, she became a key figure in the Trotskyist Young People's Socialist League, and embraced both political activism and the bohemian life of New York's East Village before continuing her education. Upon earning her master's degree from Smith College, she took a job as an assistant to noted choreographer Katherine Dunham and traveled to Los Angeles with the road tour of *Cabin in the Sky* (1941). In Los Angeles, Deren met and married Czech filmmaker Alexander Hammid, who introduced her to visual media by taking her to foreign films and by teaching her still photography and filmmaking. Deren was transformed by this relationship and embraced her new life by changing her name, in 1943, to "Maya," the word for the Hindu concept of illusion as the expression of deeper truth. In that same year, she also bought a 16 mm Bolex camera—purchased with the inheritance money left to her after the death of her father—and made her first film with Hammid, *Meshes of the Afternoon*.

If *Meshes of the Afternoon* were the only film Deren ever made, it alone would mark her place in American film history. The 14-minute silent film (later scored by her third husband, Teijo Ito) won her a Guggenheim fellowship—Deren was the first filmmaker to apply for and to win the prestigious award. *Meshes* would go on to win the Cannes Festival's 16mm "Grand Prix Internationale," the first awarded to an American, or a woman. Although it was made for only \$275—"what Hollywood spends on lipstick," as Deren was known to say—*Meshes* heralded the postwar American avant-garde, bringing a more narrative, or personal, style than earlier experimental films, which tended to favor shapes and figures over human subjects. Lauded by East Coast film critics such as Parker Tyler and P. Adams Sitney, the narrative focuses on the experiences of the protagonist (played by Deren) and unfolds within a few circumscribed locations—mostly within the couple's home. *Meshes* appropriates images from both film noir and women's melodrama, reworking them to convey the female protagonist's nightmarish experiences of domestic entrapment and alienation. The film articulates these themes through the use of complex editing patterns and film speeds, techniques that would mark Deren's filmmaking for the rest of her career. *Meshes'* formal experimentation with personal narrative ushered in the "New American Cinema" of Stan

Brakhage, Shirley Clarke, and Kenneth Anger, among others. *Meshes*, in fact, continues to inspire filmmakers to this day: Barbara Hammer pays homage to it in her film *I Was/ I Am* (1973); David Lynch has also honored Deren in his visual and narrative citations of *Meshes*, visible in both *Inland Empire* (2006) and, more strikingly, in *Lost Highway* (1997); and Derek Jarman named it among his 10 favorite films.

What continues to intrigue both artists and audiences alike about Deren are her original, highly aesthetic camerawork and editing, by which she attempts to manipulate filmic images from a specific subjective or “motivated” position. Deren’s fascination with the camera’s ability seemingly to transport bodies physically can be understood as the filmic translation of her lifelong obsession with dance. Based on her apprenticeship with Dunham, Deren published the article “Religious Possession in Dancing” (1942); she would remain fascinated, both as a scholar and artist, with the idea of ritualistic possession for the rest of her life. Indeed, several years later, Deren received a grant to research Haitian Vodoun practice, which led to the publication of her ethnographic book *Divine Horsemen: The Living Gods of Haiti* (1953); the production of the film *Divine Horsemen* (1985; edited posthumously); and the musical record *Voices of Haiti* (1953). Previous to this project, many of her short films—such as *A Study in Choreography for Camera* (1945), *Ritual in Transfigured Time* (1945–46), *Meditation on Violence* (1948), and *The Very Eye of Night* (1952–55)—included dance and often featured accomplished dancers. Yet, rather than simply photographing dance performances, she used her knowledge of choreography to emancipate the camera from its theatrical moorings. Her camera did not follow a dancer but was itself made to dance, freeing it from spatial and temporal laws of cinematic realism. The ability of film to represent the changing laws of time and space in the twentieth century is a theoretical insight Deren developed in great detail in *An Anagram of Ideas on Art, Form and Film* (1946). Deren’s philosophical treatise is a highly sophisticated theoretical engagement with film art that foreshadows much poststructuralist film theory in its examination of cinema’s new images of time and space.

Deren’s short film *At Land* (1944) exemplifies her ambition to experiment with film’s spatiotemporal relations. One of the most famous edited sequences from *Meshes* involves the elliptical cutting of shots of the protagonist walking from sea to sidewalk to carpeted floor. *At Land* builds on these series of images, extending the metaphorical connection of the sea to women’s social mobility. Deren, once again the protagonist, is filmed at the beach and then in various enclosed spaces, either with individual men or at a dinner party. The protagonist’s connection with nature and the sea is in stark contrast with her disruptive presence in social situations. This discord is expressed through jump cuts and elliptical edits, creating jarring dislocations for the viewer and protagonist alike. Her films experiment with formal qualities to articulate pointed critiques of sexual and gender power relations (and, at times, race and class as well). *Meshes*, *At Land*, *Ritual in Transfigured Time* (1946), and the unfinished *Witch’s Cradle* (1943) all deal with women’s spatial confinement, frequently symbolized as entanglements with little potential for escape. For example, *Meshes* ends with the ambiguous death of the protagonist, draped in seaweed, while *Ritual* concludes with the female African American protagonist (played by dancer Rita Christiani) sinking into the depths of the

ocean, a stunning film image that turns from positive to negative print. That Deren was able to convey such complex ideas in powerful images and emotionally compelling narratives begins to explain the lasting influence of her films.

It should be noted that contemporary musicians and filmmakers who pay their respects to Deren are indebted to feminists who spearheaded the women's recovery projects that brought attention to Deren in the 1970s and '80s. After her death in New York City on October 13, 1961, Deren's films fell out of favor and, for the most part, were no longer screened. Fortunately, second-wave feminists introduced them to new audiences at women's film festivals. Although activists and scholars held showings of her films out of the desire to reclaim women artists of the past, it was her tenacious work to organize structures such as the Film Artists Society that especially drew the attention of second-wave feminists, and feminist film collectives, like East London's "Circles." Tireless in her efforts to build collective structures to support artists, she established the Creative Film Foundation to underwrite grants for independent filmmakers as well as to organize film screenings and symposia. She also lectured and published widely, developing a public discourse about cinema in journals and magazines to help build an audience for film art. Organizer, activist, film theorist, ethnographer, auteur—these titles may not sum up Maya Deren, but taken together, they begin to explain why she is one of the most influential and legendary figures of American cinema.

Selected Filmography

Divine Horsemen: The Living Gods of Haiti (1985); *Maeva* (1961); *The Very Eye of Night* (1958); *Meditation on Violence* (1948); *Ritual in Transfigured Time* (1946); *A Study in Choreography for Camera* (1945); *At Land* (1944); *Witch's Cradle* (1944); *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943)

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—Theresa L. Geller

DISNEY, WALT. Born into a poor Chicago family on December 5, 1901, Walt Disney achieved the American Dream by becoming a popular filmmaker. He created a number of the world's most famous fictional characters and completely redefined the nature of filmic animation. An admired family man, Disney was an iconic figure whose films came to be understood as symbolic representations of the American way of life.

When still very young, Disney developed a passion for drawing. In 1928, he created what would become perhaps his best-known cartoon character, Mickey Mouse. Originally brought to the big screen during the silent era, Disney's cartoon shorts were soon accompanied by sound, and in 1929 he began to release his *Silly Symphonies*. Although they were not wildly successful, the *Silly Symphonies* series did give rise to Disney's most successful cartoon short *The Three Little Pigs* (1933). By the end of the 1930s, Mickey Mouse would be joined by two steadfast friends: Donald Duck and Goofy.

One of Disney's most important career moments came in 1937 when he released the first full-length animated feature film, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. The film was a box-office success and laid the groundwork for future extremely popular film animations, including *Pinocchio* (1940), *Fantasia* (1940), *Dumbo* (1941), *Bambi* (1942), and *Cinderella* (1950). The release of these animated films made the Disney name synonymous with family entertainment. Building on the success of his earlier animated films, Disney would go on to make his first feature film combining live action and animation, *Song of the South* (1946); his first all-live-action feature film, *Treasure Island* (1950); and his second feature combining live action and animation, *Mary Poppins* (1964).

During the 1930s and 1940s, nearly every animated feature film was in some way influenced by Disney. Expressing communal values such as hard work, the triumph of the underdog, national self-definition, and the importance of religious freedom, Disney's cartoons and films reassured Americans confronted with the threats of the Great Depression, World War II, and the looming Cold War. Viewers related to his innocent, defenseless protagonists, who were usually desperate, insecure figures faced with overwhelming challenges, but whose innate goodness and extraordinary will to survive eventually allowed them to overcome evil and set things right in their communities. By the 1950s, Disney had become such a well-known and



Creator of Mickey Mouse, Walt Disney achieved pre-eminence in movies and television and revolutionized the leisure industry with his theme park, Disneyland, which opened in 1955. (Library of Congress)

beloved figure that his face regularly graced the covers of the nation's more popular magazines.

Disney was a self-admitted moralist who saw himself as more than simply a filmmaker; he believed that he had a responsibility to act as an educator, child psychologist—child experts claimed that his films had a healthy impact on young viewers—and even as a pastor. In 1954, the National Education Association actually rewarded him with an American Education Award for his educational work. During the 1950s, millions of ordinary Americans welcomed “Uncle Walt” into their homes by way of their television sets, where he amused children and gave advice to parents, as well as inspiration and reassurance.

Beyond his contributions to film entertainment, Disney also changed the shape of recreation in America. He brought his figures to life and turned amusement into an imaginative experience by building his first Disneyland in Anaheim, California, in 1955, providing park-goers with rides, haunted houses, and jungle adventures. He also planned on opening a Walt Disney World Resort in Florida, but did not live to see the project completed in 1971.

Disney died on December 15, 1966, in Los Angeles, leaving behind a multibillion-dollar business empire. Throughout his life he demonstrated how one could be empowered by fantasy and proved, at least on a certain level, that dreams could come true.

Selected Filmography

Winnie the Pooh and the Blustery Day (1968); *The Happiest Millionaire* (1967); *The Jungle Book* (1967); *Scrooge McDuck and Money* (1967); *Monkeys, Go Home!* (1967); *The Fighting Prince of Donegal* (1966); *Follow Me, Boys!* (1966); *Lt. Robin Crusoe, U.S.N.* (1966); *The Ugly Dachshund* (1966); *Winnie the Pooh and the Honey Tree* (1966); *That Darn Cat!* (1965); *The Monkey's Uncle* (1965); *Emil and the Detectives* (1964); *The Moon-Spinners* (1964); *The Three Lives of Thomasina* (1964); *The Misadventures of Merlin Jones* (1964); *The Sword in the Stone* (1963); *Dr. Syn, Alias the Scarecrow* (1963); *The Incredible Journey* (1963); *Savage Sam* (1963); *Miracle of the White Stallions* (1963); *Son of Flubber* (1963); *Babes in Toyland* (1961); *The Absent-Minded Professor* (1961); *The Saga of Windwagon Smith* (1961); *One Hundred and One Dalmatians* (1961); *Swiss Family Robinson* (1960); *Ten Who Dared* (1960); *Pollyanna* (1960); *Kidnapped* (1960); *Noah's Ark* (1959); *Old Yeller* (1957); *Johnny Tremain* (1957); *The Great Locomotive Chase* (1956); *Davy Crockett, King of the Wild Frontier* (1955); *Contrast in Rhythm* (1955); *20000 Leagues under the Sea* (1954); *Rob Roy, the Highland Rogue* (1953); *The Sword and the Rose* (1953); *The Story of Robin Hood and His Merrie Men* (1952); *Alice in Wonderland* (1951); *Treasure Island* (1950); *Cinderella* (1950); *The Wind in the Willows* (1949); *Johnny Appleseed* (1948); *Song of the South* (1946); *Peter and the Wolf* (1946); *Bambi* (1942); *Der Fuehrer's Face* (1942); *Dumbo* (1941); *Fantasia* (1940); *Pinocchio* (1940); *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937); *Three Blind Mouseketeers* (1936); *Three Little Pigs* (1933); *Babes in the Woods* (1932); *Haunted House* (1929); *Hell's Bells* (1929); *Jungle Rhythm* (1929); *Springtime* (1929); *The Plowboy* (1929); *Mickey's Follies* (1929); *Mickey's Choo-Choo* (1929); *The Gallopin' Gaucho* (1928); *Steamboat Willie* (1928)

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—Daniela Ribitsch

DONNER, RICHARD. Richard Donner is a director and producer best known for his work on films such as *The Omen* (1976), *Superman* (1978), and the *Lethal Weapon* series of pictures released during the 1980s and 1990s. He has earned a reputation as a director who brings a raw authenticity to his source material and as someone who gives actors a lot of flexibility in their interpretations of roles. Although not as famous as many of his contemporaries, Donner has left an indelible mark on American film, and continues to be active in the industry.

Born in New York City on April 24, 1930, Donner dreamed of becoming an actor, but his cinematic interests eventually shifted to directing. He began his career making travelogues and commercials before moving into television in the late 1950s. Although Donner directed his first feature film, *X-15*, in 1961, his greatest successes came on the small screen. Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, he directed episodes of series such as *The Rifleman*, *Combat*, *Get Smart*, *Twilight Zone*, and *Kojak*. It was Donner who directed the legendary *Twilight Zone* episode “Nightmare at 20,000 Feet,” which featured William Shatner as an airline passenger convinced a monster is trying to crash the plane.

Donner continued working in television throughout the early 1970s, but also began making inroads into feature films. His first feature film of that decade, *Twinky* (1970), also known as *Lola*, was an intriguing yet somewhat derivative picture that failed to generate much interest. It was not until 1976 that Donner made the film that brought him mainstream attention. *The Omen*, the story of the young son of an American ambassador who is actually the Antichrist, became one of the biggest films of that year, earning excellent reviews for its finely crafted suspense. The movie remains one of the best horror films of the decade, an intoxicating brew of social cynicism and apocalyptic dread accentuated by Donner’s taut direction. The film mirrored the popular fascination with the supernatural and end-of-the-world scenarios popular in mid-1970s America. The primary credit goes to Donner for taking what could have been a B-movie and turning it into a believable, intelligent thriller.

Donner followed *The Omen*’s success by directing the 1978 hit adaptation of *Superman*. The defining feature of the film is that it took its subject matter seriously, marking a departure from the camp approach so prevalent since the 1960s. *Superman* launched a successful franchise, although Donner never made another film in the series. While making the original film, Donner shot scenes to be included in the sequel, *Superman 2*, but disagreements with producers led to his dismissal from the project in favor of Richard Lester. Donner always hoped to get his version of *Superman 2* released, which became a reality in 2006 when his cut appeared on DVD.

The 1980s saw Donner more active than ever. He directed seven films, spanning the genres of comedy, adventure, and action. Donner's films included *The Goonies*, his 1985 collaboration with Steven Spielberg; his update of Dickens with *Scrooged*; and the first two films of the *Lethal Weapon* series. Both *The Goonies* and *Scrooged* fared well with filmgoers if not with critics, and both remain cult favorites. Yet it was Donner's contributions to the *Lethal Weapon* film series that earned him his greatest hits of the decade. The series took the traditional "buddy film" scenario and applied it to the action genre so prevalent in the 1980s, especially films such as *Rambo* and *Dirty Harry*. What set Donner's films apart was his ability to make the characters likeable and believable. The formula worked so well that Donner directed two more *Lethal Weapon* films in the 1990s, although neither performed as well as the first had at the box office.

Donner remains an active film director in the twenty-first century, although he has yet to recapture his mainstream success of previous decades. Recent years have seen him turn his attention to film production as well as directing. Donner has served as producer or executive producer on numerous projects, including the HBO series *Tales from the Crypt* and the highly popular *X-Men* film series. He is also involved in the writing of graphic novels, serving with Geoff Johns and Adam Kubert as the new team behind *Action Comics*. After four decades of success, Richard Donner shows no signs of slowing down.

Selected Filmography

16 Blocks (2006); *Timeline* (2003); *Lethal Weapon 4* (1998); *Conspiracy Theory* (1997); *Assassins* (1995); *Maverick* (1994); *Lethal Weapon 3* (1992); *Radio Flyer* (1992); *Lethal Weapon 2* (1989); *Scrooged* (1988); *Lethal Weapon* (1987); *The Goonies* (1985); *Ladyhawke* (1985); *The Toy* (1982); *Inside Moves* (1980); *Superman* (1978); *The Omen* (1976); *Lola* (1970); *Salt and Pepper* (1968); *X-15* (1961)

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—Brad L. Duren

DURAS, MARGUERITE. Marguerite Duras is widely known in France as a prolific screenwriter, director, novelist, and playwright. In the United States, however, despite an interested critical reception for her novels among feminist academics, the numerous films that she both wrote and directed are not well known. Instead, her cinematic reputation rests primarily on two films: *Hiroshima, mon amour* (1959), for which she wrote the screenplay, and *The Lover* (1992), directed by Jean-Jacques Annaud, which is based on her "autobiographical" novel *L'Amant*.

Duras's early life experiences in the colonial world of French Indochina serve as the raw material for much of her literary and cinematic work. She was born Marguerite

Donnadieu on April 4, 1914, in Gia-Dinh, a suburb of Saigon. Her parents, Henri and Marie Donnadieu, had immigrated as part of France's "Colonial Army," and were employed there as schoolteachers; following Marguerite's father's death in 1918, her mother raised Duras and her two older brothers alone. Apart from a short trip to France during her childhood, she lived in or near Saigon until she was 18. In her teens, she had an affair with an older, married Chinese man, an experience she would return to in many variations in her work. At 18, she left Indochina to travel with her family to France, where she studied philosophy, law, mathematics, and political science at the École Libre des Sciences Politiques in Paris. In 1937, while working as a secretary at the Ministry of Colonies, she began to read extensively in French and American literature and to attend performances at the Théâtre des Mathurins, seeing this as a kind of apprenticeship in the theater. During this time she also joined the Resistance, and formed a friendship with François Mitterand that lasted until his death. Her first novel, *Les impudents*, was published in 1943, and it was at this time that she took the surname Duras, after the district in France where her father had owned a house. She began writing for the screen in 1959, when she authored the classic film treatment for *Hiroshima, mon amour*, directed by Alain Resnais.

Hiroshima, mon amour immediately established Duras's international reputation as a screenwriter, and has remained widely popular with both critics and moviegoers. Her script for the film, which has been published in book form, is seen by many as a work of art in its own right. In this film, which tells the story of a brief affair between a French actress and a Japanese man, both married, both nameless, Duras explores many of the themes that have characterized her body of work as a whole. These include the role of memory and forgetting; the links between violence and sexuality, domination and desire; and the process of mourning as a way of working through but never completely healing from the traumas of the past. Duras's commitment to the primacy of the literary over the visual can be seen in this film in the form of a discontinuity between the soundtrack and the images, a technique that serves to disrupt narrative coherence, leaving the viewer out of sync with the moment of the film in much the same way that the protagonists seem caught between past and present. Duras would later use this technique to great effect in her own films, most notably *India Song* (1975). In addition to this auditory discontinuity, *Hiroshima, mon amour* undermines its own narrative development by means of jump cutting to and from multiple flashbacks—some brief, some longer—thereby foregrounding the significance of memories that insist upon erupting into the present.

During the years from 1959 to 1984, Duras wrote numerous novels, including several that were adapted to the screen by directors such as Peter Brooks (*Moderato cantabile*, 1960), Jules Dassin (*10:30 PM Summer*, 1963), and Tony Richardson (*Le marin de Gibraltar*, 1966). She also wrote and directed 19 films of her own. Nevertheless, it was not until the 1984 publication of her novel *L'Amant*—almost immediately published in English translation as *The Lover*—that she found a wide readership in the United States. This novel, which won the 1984 Prix Goncourt, served as the basis for the 1992 film by the same title, directed in English by Jean-Jacques Annaud. It is this film that has secured Duras's reputation among English-speaking audiences, in spite of

the fact that she was so outraged by Annaud's treatment of her story that she broke with him during production and subsequently wrote *L'Amant du Chine du nord* (translated into English as *The North China Lover*) as a literary attempt to reclaim her own story from Annaud's filmic version. *The Lover* tells the story of Duras's teenage relationship with her older Chinese lover, and has received a mixed critical response, owing in part to its strange blend of eroticism and emotional distance. Reviewers have commented on the dynamics of colonialism that haunt the film (between a young woman, who nevertheless represents the colonial power of Europe, and an older man, who nevertheless represents the oppressed, colonized Other) and on the undercurrents of masochism that characterize the girl's sexuality—themes that are prominent in many of Duras's films and novels. *The Lover* was nominated in 1993 for an Academy Award for cinematography.

Duras died in her Left Bank apartment in Paris on March 3, 1996.

Selected Filmography

The Children (1984); *Il dialogo di Roma* (1982); *L'homme atlantique* (1981); *Agatha et les lectures illimitées* (1981); *Le navire Night* (1979); *Aurélia Steiner* (Melbourne) (1979); *Cesarée* (1978); *Les mains négatives* (1978); *Baxter, Vera Baxter* (1977); *Le camion* (1977); *Entire Days in the Trees* (1976); *India Song* (1975); *Woman of the Ganges* (1974); *Nathalie Granger* (1972); *Jaune le soleil* (1972); *Détruire dit-elle* (1969); *La musica* (1967); *Mademoiselle* (1966); *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959)

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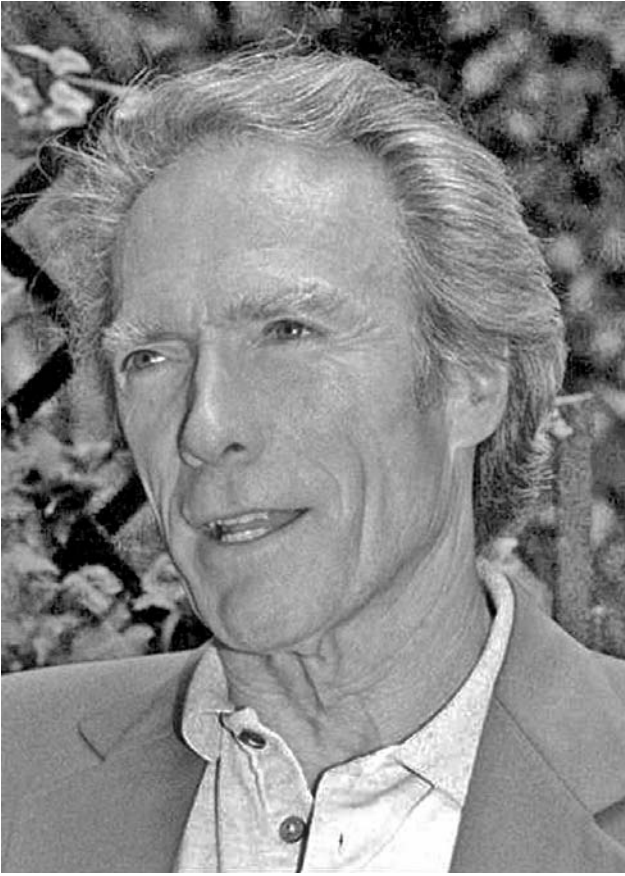
—Judith Poxon

EASTWOOD, CLINT. With a career in motion pictures that has spanned five-and-a-half decades, Clint Eastwood is one of Hollywood's living legends. A talented actor, an Oscar-winning director and producer, and an accomplished composer of scores and soundtracks, Eastwood's versatility has been the key to his enduring success.

Born on May 31, 1930, in San Francisco, Clinton Eastwood Jr. grew up in the Oakland/Piedmont area of Northern California. He served as a swimming instructor in the army from 1950 to 1953, and after a brief stint at Los Angeles City College, signed a bit player contract with Universal Studios in 1954. During his time at Universal, Eastwood landed small roles in B-movies, such as *Tarantula* (1955), then studied acting with Jack Kosslyn, whose maxim—"Don't just do something, *stand* there"—formed the cornerstone of Eastwood's acting philosophy. Seething stillness and brooding intensity became his trademarks, and in time the tall, lean, soft-spoken actor began to attract attention.

Eastwood's first starring role came from the CBS television series, *Rawhide*, where he played the boyish cowhand Rowdy Yates from 1959 to 1965. Occasionally called upon to sing in the show, Eastwood recorded an album, "Cowboy Favorites," in 1962, and made guest appearances on many TV shows, including *Mr. Ed*, in the early part of the decade. In 1964, Eastwood left Hollywood for a long-shot opportunity that would ultimately establish his international stardom. *A Fistful of Dollars* (1964) was the first in Sergio Leone's trio of "spaghetti westerns" featuring "the man with no name." In this Italian remake of Akira Kurosawa's samurai classic *Yojimbo* (1961), Eastwood plays a lone killer who rides into a Mexican border town where two rival gangs hire him for his gunfighting prowess. By the end of the film, the gangs have killed each other off, and Eastwood, the lone survivor, rides out of town.

The European success of *A Fistful of Dollars* led to two sequels, *For a Few Dollars More* (1965) and *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* (1966). These three Italian films would redefine the American western by introducing sadistic violence, unorthodox scores by Ennio Morricone, and a new kind of amoral hero driven by self-interest rather than an embedded code of ethics. Draped in a poncho, and clenching a cigarillo between impassive lips, Eastwood gave this enigmatic killer a nonchalant style that had



Best-known as a tough, quiet action hero from many westerns and police dramas, Clint Eastwood is one of Hollywood's top film stars. He began a career as a movie director in the 1970s and won wide acclaim for his 1992 film *Unforgiven*. Eastwood also served as mayor of Carmel, California, from 1986 to 1988, declining to run for reelection after his first term. (AP/Wide World Photos)

great appeal throughout Europe. Likewise, the American release of the trilogy in the late 1960s launched Eastwood's career as a Hollywood superstar.

Shortly after forging this iconic image for the Old West, Eastwood created what may be his signature character, the renegade San Francisco police detective "Dirty Harry" Callahan. In *Dirty Harry* (1971), which Eastwood's mentor Don Siegel directed, Eastwood plays a volatile cop with a distrust of authority and a penchant for phrases like, "Do you feel lucky, punk?" A box-office smash, *Dirty Harry* spawned four sequels: *Magnum Force* (1973), *The Enforcer* (1976), *Sudden Impact* (1983), and *The Dead Pool* (1988). Harry's intolerance for bureaucracy, lack of sympathy for criminals, and accuracy with his .44 magnum revolver popularized an image of vigilante justice that would peak in the Reagan era. Reagan himself made reference to a line from *Sudden Impact* while threatening to veto a proposed tax increase. Mimicking Harry, Reagan told his congressional opposition, "Go ahead, make my day."

Eastwood has played the avenging stranger role in numerous westerns, such as *Hang 'Em High* (1968) and *Pale Rider* (1985). He has replayed the streetwise cop role in *The Gauntlet* (1977) and *The Rookie* (1990). Laconic action heroes may be Eastwood's specialty, but he has also enjoyed box-office success with comic roles such as Philo Beddoe, the best friend of an orangutan in *Every Which Way but Loose* (1978) and its sequel, *Any Which Way You Can* (1980). He sang show tunes in the musical *Paint Your Wagon* (1969), and played the sensitive romantic lead to Meryl Streep's Oscar-nominated performance in *The Bridges of Madison County* (1995). Streep is just one of many actors to receive Oscar attention in a film that Eastwood directed.

As a director, Clint Eastwood has a reputation for finishing on time and under budget, but he is also increasingly known for his artistry. Eastwood has twice won

the Academy Award for directing. Making his debut with the suspense thriller *Play Misty for Me* (1971), Eastwood showed daring in both his subject and his style. As star and director of *High Plains Drifter* (1973), he took an allegorical approach, using a small western town to comment on the cultural malaise surrounding Vietnam. Many of his westerns, such as *The Outlaw Josey Wales* (1976), transcend generic boundaries by expressing ambivalence toward violence. Such was the case with *Unforgiven* (1992), which won Eastwood his first Oscar for directing. He was nominated again for *Mystic River* (2003), a murder mystery that deflates the notion that revenge is satisfying, and won a second Oscar for *Million Dollar Baby* (2004), a boxing film with a complex treatment of euthanasia. Eastwood is also a self-taught jazz pianist and has frequently composed the scores for his films. He received two Golden Globe nominations for music in the same year with *Gran Torino* (2008) and *Changeling* (2008).

Eastwood's recent movies have challenged accepted notions about his right-wing political views. Although he has often supported Republican presidential candidates, and even served as Republican mayor of Carmel, California, from 1986 to 1988, Eastwood characterizes himself as a libertarian. His later films have done as much to deconstruct the image of the right-wing reactionary as his early films did to construct it. He has completed eight films since 2000. He has starred in four of those films, and won many prestigious awards in the process. Now 80, Eastwood shows no signs of slowing down. He continues to make movies that remake his own Hollywood legend.

See also: *Flags of Our Fathers*; *Letters from Iwo Jima*

Selected Filmography

Hereafter (2010); *Invictus* (2009); *Gran Torino* (2008); *Changeling* (2008); *Letters from Iwo Jima* (2006); *Flags of Our Fathers* (2006); *Million Dollar Baby* (2004); *Mystic River* (2003); *Blood Work* (2002); *Space Cowboys* (2000); *True Crime* (1999); *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* (1997); *Absolute Power* (1997); *The Bridges of Madison County* (1995); *A Perfect World* (1993); *Unforgiven* (1992); *The Rookie* (1990); *White Hunter Black Heart* (1990); *Bird* (1988); *Heartbreak Ridge* (1986); *Pale Rider* (1985); *Sudden Impact* (1983); *Honkytonk Man* (1982); *Firefox* (1982); *Bronco Billy* (1980); *The Gauntlet* (1977); *The Outlaw Josey Wales* (1976); *The Eiger Sanction* (1975); *Breezy* (1973); *Thunderbolt and Lightfoot* (1974); *Magnum Force* (1973); *High Plains Drifter* (1973); *Joe Kidd* (1972); *Dirty Harry* (1971); *Play Misty for Me* (1971); *The Beguiled* (1971); *Kelly's Heroes* (1970); *Two Mules for Sister Sara* (1970); *Paint Your Wagon* (1969); *Where Eagles Dare* (1968); *Coogan's Bluff* (1968); *Hang 'Em High* (1968); *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* (1966); *For a Few Dollars More* (1965); *A Fistful of Dollars* (1964)

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—Joseph Christopher Schaub

EBERT, ROGER. Award-winning film critic Roger Ebert is the most prolific voice in American film review today. At an amazing rate of six reviews a week for over four decades, he has critiqued over 10,000 films. Showing a nearly unparalleled love of movies and using his keen eye for exceptional films, Ebert has consistently provided his audience with straightforward and honest critiques.

Ebert was born in Urbana, Illinois on June 18, 1942. An only child, Ebert filled his early years devouring science fiction books and magazines. While in high school, Ebert became a reporter for Champaign-Urbana's *News Gazette* and explored the theatrical world—even making a contemporary version of H.G. Wells's *War of the Worlds* with classmate Dave Stiers (David Ogden Stiers of *M*A*S*H* fame). During his college years at the University of Illinois, Ebert gained notoriety and awards with his column in the campus newspaper.

Following college, Ebert took a post at the *Chicago Sun-Times* as their new film critic. His reviews brought a fresh and youthful spirit to the stodgy and often cantankerous film critics from Chicago's other three newspapers. Early in his career, Ebert showed a knack for sharp wit and a keen eye for talent when he praised an unknown Martin Scorsese's film *Who's That Knocking at My Door* (1967) when it premiered at the Chicago Film Festival (Kelly, 1991).

Roger Ebert had a banner year in 1975, starting with winning a Pulitzer Prize for his film criticisms, the first ever in that category. This was also the year that he joined with Gene Siskel reviewing movies on television. Over the next six years, Siskel and Ebert would hone their craft in the Chicago area and on public broadcasting.

In 1981, Ebert, along with Siskel, signed a syndication deal with Tribune Entertainment that brought their show, "At the Movies," to a national audience. Three years later in 1984, the pair received an Emmy Award nomination in the category of Outstanding Informational Series. This would be their first of six nominations.

In 1986, *Siskel & Ebert* debuted as a weekly syndicated series with Buena Vista Television. Ebert gave the show its future trademark by introducing the thumb's-up/down method of completing each film review. With continued reviews in the *Chicago Sun-Times* and a nationally syndicated show, Ebert was solidifying his status as one of America's premier film critics.

The success and influence of *Siskel & Ebert* came full circle when their glowing review of *One False Move* (1992) transformed this film, planned for video release, to theatrical distribution and box-office success (Hill, 2005). Sparks also flew in 1992 when Ebert chided Siskel for giving out essential plot details while they reviewed *The Crying Game* (1992). The openness and candor of their reviews made *Siskel & Ebert* a program the national audience often used to decide whether or not to see a film.

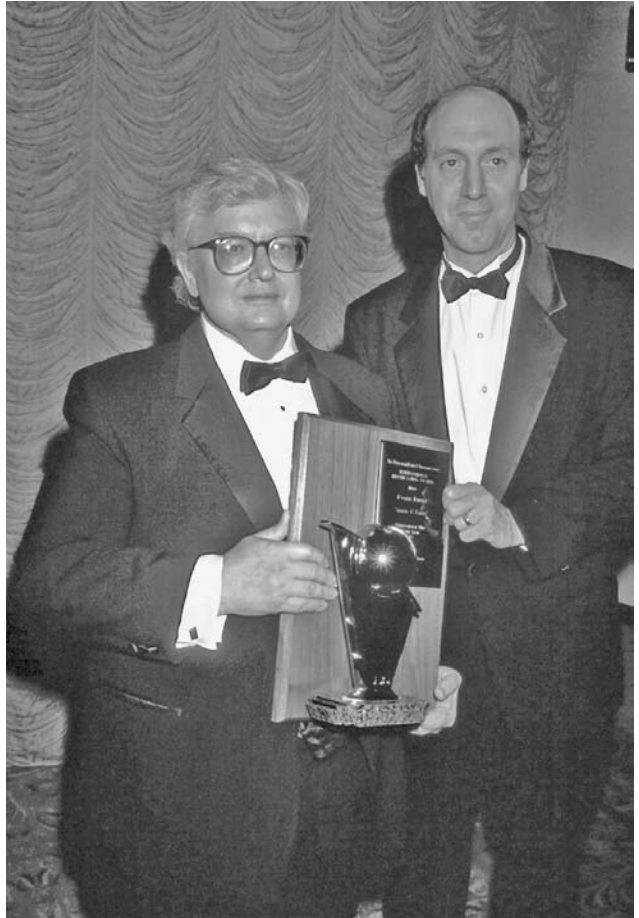
Gene Siskel died of brain cancer in 1999, ending a remarkable partnership with Ebert that had lasted nearly 25 years. While still mourning the loss, Ebert honored his friend and colleague by continuing the show with guest critics and then permanently teaming with *Chicago Sun-Times* reporter Richard Roeper in 2000. The newly minted *Ebert & Roeper* continued in syndication at the outset of the twenty-first century.

In 2004, Roger Ebert was diagnosed with a form of throat cancer that required debilitating radiation and chemotherapy. During this ordeal, he continued to write

over 250 film reviews for the *Chicago Sun-Times*, as well as for other publications (Scott, 2008). This was a staggering number for anyone, especially someone battling cancer. In his absence, Richard Roeper continued the television program with guest stars and occasional contributions from Ebert himself.

During the summer of 2006, Roger Ebert experienced a recurrence of cancer in his salivary gland. An attempt at corrective surgery failed, leaving him without the ability to speak. Undeterred, Ebert continued to be influential through his multifaceted presence as a reviewer. Using his column with the *Chicago Sun-Times* and multiple Internet sites, Ebert employed his sharp wit, ability to put himself in the audience's place, and keen eye for exceptional films to maintain his position as one of America's leading film critics.

See also: Film Criticism



Newspaper columnists and film critics Roger Ebert (left) and Gene Siskel (right). (AP/Wide World Photos)

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—Lucas Calhoun

EDISON, THOMAS ALVA. Thomas Alva Edison was an American inventor and entrepreneur. Filing over 1,000 patents during his lifetime, he influenced several components of the movie industry. He conducted experimental research in lighting, telegraphy, sound recording, and moving photography, and established industry standards, such as 35mm film and sprockets.



American inventor Thomas Edison (1847–1931).
(Chaiba Media)

Born February 11, 1847, in Milan, Ohio, Edison attended both public and private schools in Port Huron, Michigan. He held various jobs in the telegraph industry during the 1860s, and in 1868 the journal *Telegrapher* published his design for a duplex telegraph, a system that allowed messages to be sent in opposite directions on one wire simultaneously. He soon gained a reputation as an innovator in the field of telegraphy; he would go on to use his expertise in this area to help him develop landmark technological products.

The filmmaking pioneer Eadward Muybridge, who had been on the lecture circuit touting his short moving picture *Animal Locomotion*, visited Edison's lab in February 1888. Realizing that Muybridge was on to something with his "zoopraxiscope," a device for projecting filmic images, Edison

initially suggested a partnership. Although the partnership never materialized, Edison did adapt Muybridge's zoopraxiscope, turning it into a much more efficient projecting device that came to be called the Kinetoscope. On August 24, 1891, Edison filed patents for the kinetograph (camera) and the kinetoscope (the viewing implement), and Muybridge was largely forgotten.

Edison founded the Edison Manufacturing Company in 1887, building its first studio, which he called the "Black Maria," in 1892. *Scientific American* covered the first public demonstration of the Kinetoscope on May 9, 1893. For the event, Edison created a one reel melodrama, *Dashed to Death* (1909); ever utilitarian in his approach, the inventor recorded a car being driven over a cliff at Palisades, New Jersey, not merely as an aesthetic phenomenon, but to discover a formula for a steel axle that could withstand the fiery crash when the vehicle hit bottom.

Edison used the Black Maria to promote Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, before that troupe toured Europe, including producing film images of Annie Oakley demonstrating her skills as a sharp-shooter. Edison also shot scenes of boxing at his studio; interestingly, while live boxing was prohibited by law, viewing images of the brutal sport in a kinetoscope was not. In 1894 or 1895, William Kennedy Laurie Dickson (1860–1935) and

William Heise produced the earliest synchronized sound motion picture, the “Dickson Experimental Sound Film,” depicting Dickson playing the violin.

A shrewd businessman, Edison wisely secured patents or copyrights where applicable. Significantly, copyright law did not recognize motion pictures as a separate entity until 1912; before this time, Edison sent what were known as positive paper prints—a technique developed by Dickson—to the Copyright Office at the Library of Congress. Derived from short films, these prints were copyrighted as a series of still photographs gathered together in sequence; they provide us with a record of early twentieth-century life, including the attire, popular buildings, and technologies of the time.

Edison and the co-inventors in his employ created films based on popular subject matter that had been captured by still photographers during the post-Civil War period. Of particular note, they produced short scenic and travel films, with images of buildings and natural wonders—Coney Island and Niagara Falls, for example—and new-era modes of transportation. Edison’s cameras even recorded significant events of the day, such as President William McKinley’s inauguration and assassination, the Galveston hurricane (1900), and the San Francisco earthquake (1906).

Although he was not always the one who invented many of the gadgets on which he worked, Edison had a keen technological eye and improved on several mechanical devices designed by others. This was the case in regard to his work in the burgeoning film industry, as he was able to apply his previously acquired knowledge of telegraphy and sound production in phonographs to the development of other forms of presentation. In essence, then, it may be said that Edison functioned more as what we would understand today as an executive producer of films, rather than as their creator. Remarkably entrepreneurial, Edison realized that he could use the popular new medium of film to advertise his Kinetoscope, which he did in *Moving Picture News* (1913), and elsewhere. After an extraordinarily productive life, Edison died on October 18, 1931.

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—Ralph Hartsock

EISENSTEIN, SERGEI. Sergei Eisenstein was the most famous Soviet filmmaker of the first half of the twentieth century. Today, he is best remembered for his film *Battle-ship Potemkin* (1925), and for his revolutionary theory of film montage, which is still taught today as one of the few alternatives to traditional Hollywood continuity editing.

Born on January 23, 1898, in Riga, Latvia, Sergei Mikhailovich Eisenstein grew up in a prosperous middle-class Russian family. At an early age he learned French and

German and developed a lifelong passion for the arts. He entered the Institute for Civil Engineers in St. Petersburg in 1915, but was called to military service during World War I. During the Russian Revolution of 1917, he sided with the Red Army and served in the corps of engineers as an explosives technician.

Eisenstein began his artistic career as a cartoonist, publishing his first cartoon in the *St. Petersburg Gazette* in 1917. He soon became fascinated by theater, however, doing set design, costuming, and acting while still a soldier. In 1920, he secured a position as scenic designer of the First Proletkult Workers Theater. During his time at Proletkult, he began his study of stage direction with Vsevolod Meyerhold, whose theory of biomechanics and stagecraft would have lasting impact on him. Eisenstein quickly advanced as a director, and in 1923, he published his first article in *Lef*, the journal of the artistic left front. Entitled "The Montage of Attractions," the piece explained his theory for using all the elements of the dramatic arts to produce specific reactions in the audience.

Through his theatrical work, Eisenstein gradually developed an interest in film. After viewing the films of D. W. Griffith, particularly *Intolerance* (1916), and studying the basics of film editing with Lev Kuleshov and Esther Shub, he created a short film component, entitled *Glumov's Diary* (1923), for one of his stage productions. By the end of 1924, Eisenstein had completed his first feature-length film, *Strike*, which premiered in Moscow early in 1925, told the story of workers who strike to protest labor conditions at a locomotive factory and are brutally crushed by Tsarist forces. In making the film, he had dispensed with the notion of stars playing main characters, which, by the 1920s, had already become an established policy in Hollywood. Instead, he used "typage" (choosing actors with particular looks), and treated the assembled masses as characters. The film had mixed reception, but it was clear that Eisenstein was beginning to revolutionize cinema to further the aims of socialism.

In his next film, *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), he fully realized his desire to express revolutionary ideas through film. *Battleship Potemkin* was originally intended as part of a twentieth-anniversary celebration of the anti-Tsarist uprisings of 1905. Eisenstein, however, reduced the many protests of that year to a single representative episode, the mutiny of a crew of sailors who were being mistreated by the officers on their ship. Told in five acts, *Battleship Potemkin* has a precise dialectical structure specifically designed to foment revolutionary action. Through film editing, Eisenstein was developing a theory of dialectical montage based on Marx's notion of dialectical materialism in which the movement of history is determined by the clashing of economic forces. Using the formula—thesis plus antithesis yields synthesis—Eisenstein proposed that meaning, or synthesis, in film was derived from the collision between two contrasting shots. His technique was profoundly different from the Hollywood style of continuity editing, which strove to combine shots in a seamless, fluid manner so that the audience could be fully absorbed in the story. Unlike his Hollywood counterparts, Eisenstein was not interested in entertaining, but in inspiring revolutionary action.

In each of *Battleship Potemkin's* sections, an act of injustice is followed by an act of rebellion, with the rebellious acts escalating as the film progresses. In the first act, sailors who are fed rotten meat protest by staging a hunger strike. In the second act, marines who are ordered to shoot the sailors refuse and join the sailors in a mutiny.

In the third act, the battleship pulls into the Odessa harbor displaying a dead sailor before the people of Odessa with a placard indicating he died “for a bowl of soup.” Residents of Odessa then support the sailors with gifts of food. In the fourth, and most famous act, “The Odessa Steps,” the Tsar’s soldiers massacre the supporters on a monumental white staircase, after which the battleship fires on the Tsarist buildings at the top of the stairs. The Odessa Steps sequence features all of Eisenstein’s various forms of montage (metric, rhythmic, tonal, overtonal, and intellectual) to create powerful emotional effects in the viewer. In the final act, a squadron of the Tsar’s navy is called in to destroy the mutinous battleship, but instead, all the ships join the *Potemkin* in a revolutionary show of solidarity.

Battleship Potemkin made Eisenstein an international celebrity. The film was exhibited around the world, and although it was banned in some countries for its revolutionary content, it was generally seen as heralding the arrival of a new movement in film history, known as Soviet Montage. Following *Potemkin*, Eisenstein made *October* (known in the West as *Ten Days That Shook the World*, 1928), which tells, in compressed form, the story of the Russian Revolution. In *October*, Eisenstein further developed his theories, particularly stressing the intellectual montage that had been the least developed form in *Battleship Potemkin*. Following *October*, Eisenstein completed *Old and New* (*The General Line*, 1929), a film that dealt with the collectivization of a dairy farm. For the first time in this film Eisenstein used a main character, Marfa Lapkina, as the agent driving the process of modernization that brings change to the farming village.

After *Old and New*, Eisenstein traveled, first throughout Europe, then to the United States, where he was contracted by Paramount to direct a number of films, including an adaptation of Theodore Dreiser’s *An American Tragedy*, but, predictably, the deal fell through as Eisenstein’s complex scenario emphasized the failures of American capitalism rather than the culpability of the main character. Following this disappointment, he went to Mexico in 1930 to make a film that was to be financed by Upton Sinclair. Eisenstein traveled throughout Mexico with Edouard Tisse, his cameraman, and his collaborator, Grigori Alexandrov, but after a year of filming, battling opposition, overstaying his leave from the Soviet Union, and finally losing the support of Sinclair, Eisenstein was forced to leave Mexico without the negatives for *Que Viva Mexico*. Following nearly three years of international travel, Eisenstein returned to Moscow in 1932, shattered by his experiences, and suffered a nervous breakdown.

When he recovered, Eisenstein resumed teaching at GIK (Gerasimov Institute of Cinematography) in Moscow, and chaired the Directing department. He married filmmaker Vera Atasheva, and made his first sound film, *Bezhin Meadow* (1935), based on a Turgenev novel about a father who murders his revolutionary son. Misfortune continued to plague Eisenstein as *Bezhin Meadow* was rejected by the head of Soviet Cinema, Boris Shumyatsky. His attempts to continue making films were often thwarted by Stalinists in the Soviet film industry, who advocated socialist realism over what they saw as his formalist exercises.

Despite constant criticism and threats throughout the Stalinist 1930s and ’40s, Eisenstein would make two more film masterpieces. *Alexander Nevsky* (1938) told the story of a Russian prince who repelled a thirteenth-century Teutonic invasion at a

time when the threat of Nazi Germany loomed. The film's famous score was composed by Sergei Prokofiev, and its unqualified critical and popular success helped earn Eisenstein the Order of Lenin prize in 1939. *Ivan the Terrible, Part One* (1944) was also a popular and critical success, telling the story of the sixteenth-century grand prince of Moscow who crowned himself Tsar of Russia, and set about reclaiming lost territory. *Part Two*, however, angered Stalin with its critical portrayal of the powerful Tsar's transformation into a cruel dictator, and was not released in the United States until 1959.

In addition to his films, Eisenstein wrote several books and published many articles on various aspects of film theory. Two of his books, *The Film Sense* (1942) and *Film Form: Essays on Film Theory* (1949), still rank as required reading for film students who hope to understand Soviet Montage.

Sergei Eisenstein died of heart failure in Moscow on February 11, 1948, but his impact on successive generations of filmmakers has been vast. His theories of montage proved inspirational for many of the new wave movements that flourished around the world in the 1960s and 1970s. Despite critiques that have painted Eisenstein's theory of montage as propagandistic manipulation, his reputation as a cinematic genius continues to grow with time.

See also: Intellectual Montage.

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—Joseph Christopher Schaub

EPHRON, NORA. Nora Ephron is among the increasing number of women who are working as writers and directors in Hollywood. Ephron was born on May 19, 1941, the first daughter of the playwrights and screenwriters Henry and Phoebe Ephron and grew up in Beverly Hills. After graduating from Wellesley College, Ephron was a reporter at the *New York Post* from 1962 to 1968 and then worked as a freelancer

for four years. She served as a contributing editor for *New York* magazine from 1973 to 1974, the year she moved to *Esquire* to write a column and serve as a senior editor. She also published collections of her magazine articles—personal observations on feminist interests and pop culture—in books such as *Wallflower at the Orgy* (1970) and *Scribble Scribble* (1978).

Interestingly, Ephron emerged as a playwright after her parents turned the letters she sent them from Wellesley into a script for the play *Take Her, She's Mine*. Deciding to try her hand at script-writing in the 1970s, she worked on the short-lived series *Adam's Rib* in 1973 and wrote the screenplay for the TV movie *Perfect Gentlemen* in 1978. She turned her attention to the big screen in the early 1980s, writing, with Alice Arlen, the screenplay for the box-office hit *Silkwood* (1983). The film dramatized the harrowing story of Karen Silkwood, a disgruntled employee at a Crescent, Oklahoma, nuclear power plant who died in a mysterious car crash. That same year her novel *Heartburn* appeared. Based on her marriage to the journalist Carl Bernstein, her second husband, the book was eventually turned into a movie, also called *Heartburn* (1986). Although the picture boasted a star-studded cast, including Meryl Streep and Jack Nicholson, it did poorly at the box-office.

Ephron found the filmic success for which she was looking with *When Harry Met Sally* (1989), a delightful romantic comedy starring Billy Crystal and Meg Ryan as longtime friends who find love with each other after years of failed relationships with others. Heralded as the next great writer of romantic comedies, Ephron surprised many people in the industry when she followed *When Harry Met Sally* with *Cookie* (1989)—co-written with Arlen—and *My Blue Heaven* (1990), two crime comedies, and her directorial debut, the drama *This Is My Life* (1992). The latter film, which Ephron co-wrote with her sister Delia, follows a single mother (Julie Kavner) who pursues her dream of becoming a stand-up comic while her children languish at home.

Finally returning to the romantic comedy, Ephron co-wrote the script for *Sleepless in Seattle* (1993) with David S. Ward and Jeff Arch. Drawing on Leo McCarey's *An Affair to Remember* (1957) for inspiration, *Sleepless* stars Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan as star-crossed lovers who finally find each other at the top of the Empire State Building. The film charmed audiences, and although her next project, *Mixed Nuts* (1994), was rejected by viewers, Ephron would go on to pen romantic comedy hits such as *Michael* (1996) and the updated version of *The Shop around the Corner* (1940), *You've Got Mail* (1998), which Ephron directed and co-write with her sister Delia, and which again starred Hanks and Ryan as lovers who must find each other by way of a most circuitous route.

The sisters then adapted Delia's novel *Hanging Up* (2000) into a film of the same name, and Nora directed another crime comedy, the box-office flop *Lucky Numbers* (2000). After that failure, Ephron wrote *Imaginary Friends*, a play that opened at San Diego's Old Globe Theatre in 2002. She returned to Hollywood three years later to co-write—again with Delia—and direct the big-screen adaptation of the 1960s sitcom *Bewitched* (2005). Although it featured Nicole Kidman as the spirited witch Samantha, the film was a critical and box-office failure. Ephron would wait another four years before making her next film, *Julie & Julia* (2009), adapted from the memoirs of Julie Powell and Julia Child.

Turning her writing skills to another medium, Ephron has developed her own blog; in 2006 she gathered her Internet musings into a collection of essays: *I Feel Bad about My Neck: And Other Thoughts on Being a Woman*.

Selected Filmography

Julie & Julia (2009); *Bewitched* (2005); *Hanging Up* (2000); *You've Got Mail* (1998); *Michael* (1996); *Mixed Nuts* (1994); *Sleepless in Seattle* (1993); *This Is My Life* (1992); *My Blue Heaven* (1990); *When Harry Met Sally* (1989); *Cookie* (1989); *Heartburn* (1986); *Silkwood* (1983)

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—Albert Rolls

FAIRBANKS, DOUGLAS, SR. Referred to by some as “The King of Hollywood,” Douglas Fairbanks Sr. was one of the dominant figures of the early film industry. His dashing good looks made him the quintessential leading man of the silent era, and his business acumen and vision helped create United Artists and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. During the 1920s he and his wife, fellow screen star Mary Pickford, reigned as Hollywood’s first great “power couple.”

Douglas Elton Thomas Ullman Fairbanks Sr. was born May 23, 1883, in Denver, the son of an attorney who abandoned the family when Douglas was five years old. As a child Fairbanks showed an interest in the stage and at the age of 11 began performing in local theater productions in Denver. He won rave reviews for his work and established a reputation in the Denver area as a natural talent. He dropped out of high school during his senior year and in 1900 moved to New York City to pursue acting as a profession. He worked a series of odd jobs before making his Broadway debut in 1902 in a play titled *The Duke’s Jester*. In 1907, he married Anna Beth Sully, and the couple had one child, Douglas Elton Fairbanks, who the world would later know as the actor Douglas Fairbanks Jr.

Seeing the potential in the emerging film industry, the ambitious Fairbanks moved to Hollywood in 1915, where he signed a contract with the Triangle Film Corporation and began working with famed director D. W. Griffith. That year he made his first film, *The Lamb*, and within a very short time established himself as one of Hollywood’s most popular actors. Fairbanks eventually signed with Paramount, where much of his early work consisted of light-hearted romantic comedies that the public loved. In 1916, he met Mary Pickford, the most popular actress in the country at the time, and the two soon began an affair. In 1917, when the United States entered World War I, Pickford, Fairbanks and their friend Charlie Chaplin toured the country selling war bonds. By 1918, Fairbanks was one of the biggest box-office draws in the movie industry and a keen businessman who continually sought more control over the business end of the motion pictures in which he appeared. Together with Pickford, Chaplin, D. W. Griffith, and attorney William G. McAdoo, he founded United Artists in an



In the post–World War I film industry, Douglas Fairbanks found his niche as an action hero and made the transition to sound through roles in *The Mark of Zorro*, *Three Musketeers*, and *Robin Hood*, although age began to make swashbuckling more difficult. (Library of Congress)

effort to give the stars complete artistic control over their films and establish a distribution network that would give them a greater share of the profits from their movies.

After beginning his relationship with Pickford, Fairbanks divorced his first wife and married the actress in 1922. Hollywood's first great celebrity union generated a mass of publicity, and huge crowds greeted the couple during a honeymoon tour of Europe. In California their Beverly Hills estate, called "Pickfair," was the social center of Hollywood. During the 1920s, Fairbanks began making the high-energy action pictures for which he would be best remembered. These included pictures such as *The Mark of Zorro* (1920), *The Three Musketeers* (1921), *Robin Hood* (1922), *The Thief of Bagdad* (1924), and *The Black Pirate* (1926). The decade also saw Fairbanks establish a number of Hollywood institutions and traditions that remain an integral part of the film industry. In 1927, he was a founding partner of Grauman's Chinese Theater and, in

the first ceremony of its type, Fairbanks and Pickford placed their hand- and footprints in wet cement for the theater's grand opening. The same year Fairbanks won election as the first president of the Motion Picture Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the first Academy Awards were presented in his office.

The end of the silent movie era marked a rapid downturn in Fairbanks's fortunes, and by the early 1930s the aging star had lost interest in the industry that he helped create. No longer up to the physical challenge that some of his earlier roles required, the chain-smoking Fairbanks watched as the American public embraced a new, younger generation of action stars. His personal life also began to deteriorate during the period. After more than a decade as Hollywood's most famous couple, he and Mary Pickford separated in 1933 and divorced three years later. He retired from acting after appearing in *The Private Life of Don Juan* (1934). Fairbanks married his third wife,

Sylvia Ashley, in 1936, and spent much of the remainder of his life travelling. He died of a heart attack at his home in Santa Monica, California, on December 12, 1939.

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—Ben Wynne

FLEMING, VICTOR. One of the most notable directors of the early film industry, Victor Fleming directed dozens of feature films during a career that spanned more than 30 years. While he worked with most of the notable actors and actresses of Hollywood's golden era, he is probably best known for directing the film classics *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) and *Gone with the Wind* (1939).

Victor Fleming was born on February 23, 1883 (though some sources say 1889), in Pasadena, California. As a young man he worked as a mechanic and racecar driver. In an era when reliable automobile pilots were at a premium, he found work in 1910 as a stunt driver in films, which eventually led to work behind the camera. He served as an assistant cameraman under director Allan Dwan and worked on a number of early films starring Douglas Fairbanks Sr. By 1915, Fleming was director of photography for director D. W. Griffith and well on his way to a successful career in the film industry. During World War I, Fleming served in the army and was the chief cameraman for Woodrow Wilson as Wilson negotiated the Treaty of Versailles in France in 1919. Following the war, Fleming directed his first feature films, *When Clouds Go By* (1919) and *The Mollycoddle* (1920), both of which starred Fairbanks. Working for United Artists and Paramount during the 1920s, he established a reputation as a talented, tough director capable of delivering aggressive dramas that today would be characterized as "action pictures." He also set the standard for directors of the period who were making the transition from silent films to "talkies."

Fleming's career reached a turning point in 1927 when he directed one of the landmark films of early Hollywood, *The Virginian*, an adaptation of the popular Owen Wister western novel. In the film Fleming worked with a young actor named Gary Cooper, and under Fleming's direction Cooper emerged as a star destined to become an American film icon. During the 1930s, Fleming signed with MGM and directed a number of successful films including *Red Dust* (1932), *Treasure Island* (1934), *Reckless* (1935), and *The Farmer Takes a Wife* (1935). As was the case with Cooper, Fleming was credited with helping guide the early career of Spencer Tracy, who starred for the director in *Captains Courageous* (1937) and won an Oscar for Best Actor for his performance.



Director Victor Fleming and actress Jean Harlow stand on a staircase, looking over the railing. Fleming directed Harlow in the films *Red Dust* and *Bombshell*. (Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

The late 1930s represented the high-water mark in Fleming's career, as he directed two of the most beloved motion pictures of all time, *The Wizard of Oz* and *Gone with the Wind* (both 1939), which were both nominated for the Best Picture Academy Award during the same year, with the latter winning the Oscar. Though known as a rough-and-tumble "man's director," he was able to coax stellar performances from a young Judy Garland and from the temperamental Vivien Leigh. Under Fleming's direction Leigh won the Best Actress Oscar for her performance in *Gone with the Wind* and Hattie McDaniel won the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress. Fleming himself won the 1939 Academy Award as Best Director for his successful efforts in bringing Margaret Mitchell's epic novel about the Old South to the screen. Fleming was also Clark Gable's favorite director, and the two good friends worked together on a number of projects. Fleming continued

to direct successful films into the 1940s, but none would match *Gone with the Wind* or *The Wizard of Oz* in long-term appeal. Some of his later works included *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1941), *Tortilla Flat* (1942), *A Guy Named Joe* (1943), and *Adventure* (1946). In 1948, he directed Ingrid Bergman in *Joan of Arc*, his final film. Fleming died suddenly on January 6, 1949, while vacationing near Cottonwood, Arizona.

Victor Fleming left a rich legacy as a filmmaker, although he has traditionally been underrated. One of the most respected directors in the early period of Hollywood, he deftly navigated the waters from silent pictures to "talkies," and from black-and-white film to color. He also established a cinematic style that many successful directors who followed him sought to emulate.

Selected Filmography

Joan of Arc (1948); *Adventure* (1945); *A Guy Named Joe* (1943); *Tortilla Flat* (1942); *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1941); *Gone with the Wind* (1939); *The Wizard of Oz* (1939); *Test Pilot*

(1938); *Captains Courageous* (1937); *The Farmer Takes a Wife* (1935); *Reckless* (1935); *Treasure Island* (1934); *The Wet Parade* (1932); *Around the World with Douglas Fairbanks* (1931); *Renegades* (1930); *Common Clay* (1930); *The Virginian* (1929); *The Wolf Song* (1929); *The Awakening* (1928); *Abie's Irish Rose* (1928); *The Rough Riders* (1927)

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—Ben Wynne

FLYNN, ERROL. Errol Leslie Thomson Flynn was born in the British Commonwealth seaport of Hobart, Tasmania, on June 20, 1909. He was an Australian film actor descended from an old Antrim Catholic family from Ireland. Famous for his romantic, swashbuckler roles, he became a Hollywood star during the 1930s and 1940s. A compelling screen figure and notorious womanizer, Flynn took roles in costume action-adventures that seemed to match his flamboyant lifestyle perfectly. He was married three times: to Lili Damita, Nora Eddington, and Patrice Wymore. He had four children: a son, Sean, and three daughters, Deirdre, Rory (who wrote *The Baron of Mulholland. A Daughter Remembers Errol Flynn* in 2006), and Arnella Roma. After becoming an American citizen in 1942, Flynn sought to join the American army. To his great disappointment, he was rejected due to having been exposed to several different diseases. Flynn died on October 14, 1959, of a heart attack in Vancouver, Canada, and is interred in Forest Lawn Memorial Park Cemetery, in Glendale, California.

Flynn attended fine schools in Australia and England, but was expelled from most; his rebellious, adventurous nature made him change jobs several times when he was in his late teens and early twenties. In 1933, an Australian film producer saw the tall, athletic, good-looking Flynn and offered him a part in *In the Wake of the Bounty*. After his debut in the role of Fletcher Christian, he passionately embraced acting, which he maintained came quite naturally to him. That same year he went to England, where he gained acting experience with the Northampton Repertory Company. A role in *Murder at Monte Carlo* (1934), a low-budget mystery film made by Warner Bros.-Teddington Studios, UK, led to his first Hollywood contract: Flynn was the last minute replacement for Robert Donat in Warner Brother's pirate epic *Captain Blood* (1935). The role as the dashing swashbuckler Blood brought him instant success and worldwide popularity.

Nicknamed the Tasmanian devil, Flynn despised mediocrity above all things. In *They Died with Their Boots On* (1942), Flynn as General George Armstrong Custer

described his artistic credo when asked where he was going: "To hell or glory. It depends upon your point of view." Embodying characters such as Captain Blood, Miles Hendon in *The Prince and The Pauper* (1937), Sir Robin Hood of Locksley in *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938), the Earl of Essex in *The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex* (1939), Captain Geoffrey Thorpe in *The Sea Hawk*, (1940), James J. Corbett in *Gentleman Jim* (1942), and Don Juan in the *Adventures of Don Juan* (1949), Flynn became a prodigal figure within the motion picture world. He defined the unique male archetype of the noble, dashing hero of the silver screen, creating a constellation of manly virtues that made him, in Jack L. Warner's words, "all the heroes in one magnificent, sexy, animal package." Indeed, Flynn's characterization of the roguish antihero would influence the way other action-movie roles were conceived.

Flynn was notorious for his high-spirited bacchanalias, hedonistic lifestyle, and amorous escapades. His freewheeling life took a serious turn in 1942, when two underage girls accused him of statutory rape. Although he was cleared of the charges a year later, the rape trial had a strong impact on his career. As a result of this experience, Flynn left Hollywood in 1952. After a detour in Europe, he came back in 1956 and played roles of embittered men in *The Sun Also Rises* (1957), *Too Much Too Soon* (1958), and *The Roots of Heaven* (1958).

Flynn was interested in politics, co-authored several screenplays, and wrote three books. He authored *Beam Ends* (1937) and *Showdown* (1946), as well as a posthumously published autobiography entitled *My Wicked, Wicked Ways* (1959). A leftist, he narrated the documentary film *Cuban Story* (1959) and wrote, narrated, and co-produced *Cuban Rebel Girls* (1959), a semidocumentary tribute to Fidel Castro. These last films made him persona non grata in 1950s Hollywood. Sadly, despite his numerous notable roles, Flynn was never nominated for any awards.

See also: Action-Adventure Film, The

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—Réka M. Cristian

FORD, JOHN. One of the most renowned directors in the history of Hollywood, John Ford will always be associated with making movies that captured enduring images of the mythic American landscape. He made over 130 films that spanned from the early silent era to the late 1960s; and while his work encompassed many genres and

was set in diverse periods of history, he is best remembered for a cycle of westerns, often filmed in Utah's rugged iconic Monument Valley, in which he explored the myths, archetypes, and jarring contradictions inherent in stories of American exceptionalism. Ford is still Hollywood's most honored director, having won more Oscars (four) than any other director in history. Oddly enough, however, none of his Oscars was awarded for his westerns, an indication of the man's breadth of accomplishment, his complex artistic sensibility, and Hollywood's uncomfortable relationship to the genre.

Born John Martin Aloysius Feeney in Cape Elizabeth, Maine, on February 1, 1894, to Irish immigrant parents, he wandered to Hollywood at the age of 19, following his brother Francis, who was directing and acting in silent films. In later life, Ford maintained he never wanted to



John Ford (seen here in 1934) is the only Hollywood director to win five Academy Awards. Ford is known for films such as his 1940 adaptation of John Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath*. (AP/Wide World Photos)

have anything to do with the movies, but was simply broke and did what he could to eat. He rode as a clansman in D. W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915), but hurt himself when he ran into a branch on the first day of shooting; he spent several days after the accident observing the master Griffith at his craft. The experience proved significant if not immediately life altering; after years of working for his brother and various other directors as a laborer, actor, stuntman, property man, and general assistant, he got his first chance to direct at the age of 23 when the man assigned to the job he eventually took did not show up. By then John Feeney had changed his name to Jack Ford, altering it again to the more formal-sounding John Ford when he began to be assigned A-pictures.

In 1924, he directed his 50th and most ambitious picture to date, *Iron Horse*, an epic about the building of the transatlantic railroad. Filmed on location in Nevada, often in extreme conditions of cold and snow, the mammoth production traced themes that would emerge throughout Ford's work: the interplay and conflict of ethnic and racial communities during the expansion of the American continent; the effect of landscape on the way Americans imagine their destiny; and the conflict embedded in the

American psyche between community and the individual. The film was also marked by Ford's technique of blending raucous and crude humor into otherwise serious dramatic material, a practice critics never failed to abhor and Ford never stopped practicing.

By the early sound era he had developed into one of Hollywood's most trusted and eclectic directors, making movies ranging from high-toned melodrama (*Arrowsmith* 1931), to adventure (*The Lost Patrol* 1933), to romantic comedy (*The Whole Town's Talking* 1935), to biography (*Mary of Scotland* 1936). But the most representative Ford pictures of this era—ones in which the subject matter began to evolve toward themes he would pursue in the bulk of his career—were those that made up an informal trilogy starring American humorist Will Rogers: *Doctor Bull* (1933) *Judge Priest* (1934), and *Steamboat Round the Bend* (1935). If these films veer toward nostalgia and folksy paternalism—a tendency throughout Ford's work—they nonetheless confront the ugliness of racial prejudice and intolerance in otherwise idealized rural communities.

In 1935, Ford won his first Best Director Oscar for *The Informer*, a dark and shadowy adaptation of the Liam O'Flaherty novel of betrayal and redemption in Ireland during "the troubles." Although stylistically the film owed a great deal to German Expressionist directors like F. W. Murnau and Fritz Lang, it marked the enduring personal interest Ford had in making films set in his often idealized ancestral homeland. Ford remained a self-conscious Irish American, and while it sometimes broadly passed into uncomfortable clichés—the heavy-drinking, brawling, and sentimental Irish braggart is a character that appears even in many of his westerns—the strong Irish ethnic flavor in his work was indicative of the rough-hewn son-of-an-immigrant American identity of which Ford was proud, and that he had no interest in obscuring even after he became a Hollywood legend. Indeed, one of the most personal films of his late career, *The Quiet Man* (1952), filmed on location in County Mayo, Ireland, although invested with a rather sentimental charm and lyricism, did not shy away from exploring the troubling issues of sectarian division, betrayal, sexism, and alcoholism.

In the late 1930s, Ford began to work with two American actors who in their own very powerful ways would develop into iconic presences in the American cultural landscape: Henry Fonda and John Wayne. Indeed, the Ford films that star these two actors form the basis of his most enduring and resonant accomplishment. These films seem to speak to each other, counteract each other, and even debate each other, as Ford critiques and glorifies aspects of the American expansionist past.

In 1939, Ford cast Fonda as a settler caught up in fighting during the Revolutionary War in *Drums along the Mohawk*, an epic in which the director examines the uncertain national affiliation and nascent patriotism of people struggling to survive in the wilderness. In the same year, Ford gave Fonda the career-changing lead role in *Young Mr. Lincoln*. Admired by Sergei Eisenstein for its subtle visual dialectic, the film was in essence a courtroom melodrama in which the young Abraham Lincoln defends a man unjustly accused of murder. Ford coaxed the reluctant Fonda to take the part, helping him understand that the Lincoln he was playing was merely a backwoods hick lawyer with no particular mark of greatness about him; Ford knew the audience would project Lincoln's future greatness onto the actor's every step and word. In these films, and in the documentary-flavored *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940)—a powerful adaptation

of the John Steinbeck novel about the migration of sharecroppers from Oklahoma's dust bowl to California's fertile valleys that presented a surprisingly sharp critique of capitalism—Ford helped to shape Henry Fonda's persona as a strong man of quiet integrity in whom the greatest hopes of the common citizen stirred.

If, in Ford's films, Fonda largely came to represent the American individual quietly standing for collective justice and operating within the somewhat porous boundaries of constitutional law (themes Ford exploited beautifully in the poetic 1946 western *My Darling Clementine*, in which Fonda played the awkward lawman Wyatt Earp), John Wayne came to represent the country's conflicted relationship with an ideology of romantic individualism that threatened civil society. Ford made Wayne a star by casting him as the gentle outlaw the Ringo Kid in the classic western *Stagecoach* (1939), a populist saga that suggests that civilization, represented by the microcosmic space of the stagecoach, requires the instinctual abilities and innate morality of an outlaw to save it.

Stagecoach became the first in a series of Ford's westerns in which Wayne was used simultaneously to reflect and to disrupt the audience's attraction to such characters. Notable among these films is the so-called Cavalry Trilogy, beginning with 1948's *Fort Apache* (which co-starred Fonda, cast against his screen image as a Custer-like martinet who leads his regiment to slaughter), *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* (1949), and *Rio Grande* (1950), three films that together form a complex examination of how military duty and ritual served the purposes of American projects of conquest and expansion even while calling them into question. It may be that Wayne and Ford's most famous collaboration came with *The Searchers* (1955), in which Wayne played the racist former Confederate soldier Ethan Edwards, who leads a search to avenge the murder of his brother's family and the abduction of his niece by Comanche Indians. In that film, the code of individualism seems demonic, and comes close to disrupting the potential for society to heal the wounds inflicted by its racist past.

Ford's work distinguished itself throughout his career by the array of character actors who repeatedly appeared in his movies over the decades. He called them his trademark "John Ford Stock Company," a fluid group that helped deepen his exploration of the nature of community. Part of the pleasure in watching Ford's movies is in seeing these actors continue to play similar roles, to age, and to carry with them the legacies of their past performances.

It may be argued that Ford was an artist of his time, and as such, his films do not always age well. A selective compilation of his western battle scenes would suggest he didn't shy away from the visual cliché of anonymous marauding Indians dying anonymous deaths. Did his films contribute to simplistic and perhaps racist stereotypes of Native Americans? Ford was troubled enough with the question that late in his career he made the epic *Cheyenne Autumn* (1964), which tells the story of conquest from the Native American point of view. The elegiac film was deemed leaden by many critics, and its casting of non-Native American actors in major Native American roles would be more troubling if had not been so typical of Hollywood's casting practices during that period.

Ford served in the Navy during WWII, and he made a series of battle documentaries for the American military that earned him the rank of Admiral. But by the mid-1960s,

the director's increasingly nostalgic view of military service, his hardening right-wing politics (he produced for the military in 1971 the prowar documentary *Vietnam! Vietnam!*), and his increasingly positive view of what many perceived of as the problematic American past made him seem reactionary and out of touch with the changing politics of the New Hollywood. Approached by many critics and writers who valued his wisdom and knowledge of the industry, when he did grant interviews he often came off as cynical and disagreeable. Nevertheless, his influence on directors coming of age during the 1960s and '70s was immense. Just as Orson Welles watched *Stagecoach* over 40 times before he filmed *Citizen Kane*, a host of later directors of the New American Cinema studied Ford's work, including Martin Scorsese, whose *Taxi Driver* (1974) reads as a nightmarish urban updating of Ford's *The Searchers* in its relentless exploration of America's violently conflicted attitude toward homicidal heroes.

In 1973 Ford was chosen as the first recipient of the American Film Institute's Lifetime Achievement Award. He died on August 31, 1973, widely acclaimed by his surviving colleagues in the industry as America's greatest film director.

Selected Filmography

7 Women (1966); *Cheyenne Autumn* (1964); *Donovan's Reef* (1963); *How the West Was Won* (1962); *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962); *Two Rode Together* (1961); *Sergeant Rutledge* (1960); *The Horse Soldiers* (1959); *Korea* (1959); *The Last Hurrah* (1958); *Gideon of Scotland Yard* (1958); *The Wings of Eagles* (1957); *The Searchers* (1956); *Mister Roberts* (1955); *The Long Gray Line* (1955); *Mogambo* (1953); *The Sun Shines Bright* (1953); *What Price Glory* (1952); *The Quiet Man* (1952); *This Is Korea!* (1951); *Rio Grande* (1950); *Wagon Master* (1950); *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* (1949); *3 Godfathers* (1948); *Fort Apache* (1948); *The Fugitive* (1947); *My Darling Clementine* (1946); *They Were Expendable* (1945); *How to Operate Behind Enemy Lines* (1943); *German Industrial Manpower* (1943); *December 7th* (1943); *The Battle of Midway* (1942); *Sex Hygiene* (1942); *Torpedo Squadron* (1942); *How Green Was My Valley* (1941); *Tobacco Road* (1941); *The Long Voyage Home* (1940); *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940); *Drums along the Mohawk* (1939); *Young Mr. Lincoln* (1939); *Stagecoach* (1939); *Submarine Patrol* (1938); *Four Men and a Prayer* (1938); *The Hurricane* (1937); *Wee Willie Winkie* (1937); *The Plough and the Stars* (1936); *Mary of Scotland* (1936); *The Prisoner of Shark Island* (1936); *Steamboat Round the Bend* (1935); *The Informer* (1935); *Judge Priest* (1934); *The Lost Patrol* (1934); *Arrow-smith* (1931); *Men without Women* (1930); *The Black Watch* (1929); *Strong Boy* (1929); *Riley the Cop* (1928); *Napoleon's Barber* (1928); *Hangman's House* (1928); *Four Sons* (1928); *Upstream* (1927); *The Blue Eagle* (1926); *3 Bad Men* (1926); *The Iron Horse* (1924)

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—Robert Cowgill

FOSTER, JODIE. An award-winning American actress, producer, and director, Jodie Foster catapulted to superstardom during the 1990s. Her enormous talents as an actress have earned her worldwide respect. Considered to be one of the most powerful actresses in Hollywood today, it is widely believed in the movie industry that having Foster star in a movie guarantees that it will become a box-office success.

Alicia Christian “Jodie” Foster was born on November 19, 1962, in Los Angeles, California, to parents Evelyn “Brandy” Foster, a film producer, and Lucius Fisher Foster III, a real estate broker. Her first experience with acting came at age three when she was featured in a Coppertone suntan lotion commercial. By age eight, the young actress had performed in more than 45 commercials. Foster made her television acting debut in 1969 on the CBS television show *Mayberry, R.F.D.* In 1972, the young star made her motion picture debut in the Walt Disney film, *Napoleon and Samantha*. Throughout the early 1970s, Foster performed in several additional movies, including *Menace on the Mountain* (1973), *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* (1975), *Bugsy Malone* (1976), and *Freaky Friday* (1976). A pivotal role in her career came in 1976 when Foster co-starred with Robert De Niro in *Taxi Driver*. Her portrayal of Iris, a 12-year-old prostitute, earned her Best Supporting Actress Awards from the New York Film Critics, the National Film Critics, and the Los Angeles Film Critics as well as an Academy Award nomination.

In 1980, Foster graduated valedictorian from the French-speaking prep school the Lycée Français de Los Angeles. She then took a break from her acting career to attend Yale University. In 1985, she graduated magna cum laude with a BA in literature. While attending the university as a freshman, Foster became a media sensation when John Hinckley Jr. attempted to assassinate President Ronald Reagan on March 30, 1981. Hinckley claimed that his actions were an expression of his love for Foster.

In 1988, Foster's portrayal of Sarah Tobias, a working-class rape survivor, in the critically acclaimed *The Accused* earned her both a Golden Globe Award and an Academy Award for Best Actress. In 1991, Foster won a second Academy Award for Best Actress for her portrayal of FBI agent Clarice Starling in the blockbuster hit *The Silence of the Lambs*. That same year, Foster also starred in and directed her first movie, *Little Man Tate*. In 1992, she founded her own production company, Egg Pictures, which specialized in the production of independent films. In 1994, Foster co-produced and starred in *Nell*, which told the story of a young girl living in total isolation in the back hills of North Carolina. By now an established actress in Hollywood, Foster continued to obtain highly sought-after roles in numerous movies. In 1997, she starred alongside Matthew McConaughey in the science fiction movie *Contact*. *Panic Room* (2002), in which she played the lead, was also a box-office success. In 2004, Foster expanded her acting repertoire when she took on a role in the French-speaking film *Un long dimanche de fiançailles* (*A Very Long Engagement*). The movie gave her the opportunity to showcase her fluency in the French language. In 2005, she starred in the action thriller *Flightplan*, which reached number one at the box office. In 2006, she co-starred with Denzel Washington in the Spike Lee movie *Inside Man*. Finally, in 2007, Foster starred in and produced *The Brave One*, which also reached number one at the box office.

An enormously talented actress and well-educated woman, Foster has achieved superstar status. Her acting, as both a child star and then as an adult actress, has always been consistently strong. On the movie set, she has proven herself to be dependable, professional, and adaptable to a broad range of movie genres, including comedy, drama, science fiction, and the action thriller. Today, Foster continues to be a much sought after actress by movie producers as well as an enormous box-office draw. Her acting has already earned her an important place in American cinema history.

See also: *Silence of the Lambs*, *The Women in Film*

Selected Filmography (Director)

The Beaver (2010); *Home for the Holidays* (1994); *Little Man Tate* (1991)

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—Bernadette Zbicki Heiney

FRANKENHEIMER, JOHN. An innovative American television and film director known for his distinctive use of dialogue and unconventional camera angles, John Frankenheimer was born on February 19, 1930, in New York City. A 1951 graduate of Williams College, Massachusetts, Frankenheimer had his first experience in film-making while a member of the U.S. Air Force Motion Picture Squadron. Following his discharge in 1953, Frankenheimer obtained a position as an assistant director and later as a director of live television with CBS. He worked on a number of shows, including *You Are There*, *Playhouse 90*, *Climax!*, and *Danger*. Frankenheimer's work earned him 14 Emmy Award nominations, and he was twice awarded the Television Critics Award for Best Director.

Frankenheimer's first foray into film was *The Young Stranger* (1957). As in many of his later pictures, Frankenheimer sought to address important social issues in this film. Based on an episode of *Climax!*, *The Young Stranger* explores coming-of-age issues and tensions between a son and his father. Unhappy with the process of making the film, he returned to television. It was not until 1961, when he made *The Young Savages*, that he began exclusively to make films for the big screen. *The Young Savages* also marked Frankenheimer's first collaboration with Burt Lancaster; the director and popular actor would go on to make three more pictures together: *The Birdman of Alcatraz* (1962), *Seven Days in May* (1964), and *The Train* (1964).

Frankenheimer's most controversial and disturbing film may have been *The Manchurian Candidate*, released in 1962. Starring Frank Sinatra, Laurence Harvey, and Angela Lansbury, *The Manchurian Candidate* addressed issues of paranoia and political extremism in Cold War America. The film was well received by critics and audiences alike, receiving 1963 Oscar nominations for Best Supporting Actress for Angela Lansbury and Best Film Editing for Ferris Webster; Frankenheimer was nominated for the Best Director Golden Globe Award.

In 1964, Frankenheimer followed up *The Manchurian Candidate* with *Seven Days in May*, which dealt with the political intrigue swirling around a right-wing plot to overthrow the U.S. government. In 1966, he made *Seconds*, starring Rock Hudson, which, along with *The Manchurian Candidate* and *Seven Days in May*, is considered part of Frankenheimer's "paranoia trilogy." *Seconds* centers on a secretive organization that provides its clients with new identities and lives for the right price. Themes such as the pursuit of youth, perfection, and materialism are addressed. The unusual camera angles, distortions, and the grim narrative, however, did not appeal to audiences, and the film proved to be a disappointment at the box office.

By 1968, Frankenheimer's career faltered. A close friend of Robert Kennedy, Frankenheimer was traumatized by the presidential candidate's assassination. Suffering from depression and alcoholism, he relocated to Europe. Returning to the United States in 1973, Frankenheimer released a number of mediocre thrillers, including *The Iceman Cometh* (1973), *Impossible Object* (1973), *99 and 44/100% Dead* (1974), *French Connection II* (1975), and *Black Sunday* (1977). His alcoholism became an issue while he was filming *The Challenge* in Kyoto, Japan, in 1982.

Struggling with his addiction, Frankenheimer continued to make films of varying quality: while *52 Pick-Up* (1986) was successful, *The Holcroft Covenant* (1985), *Dead Bang* (1989), *The Fourth War* (1990), and *Year of the Gun* (1991) were all box-office failures.



Director John Frankenheimer (center) on the set of his film *Young Savages*. To the right are actors Burt Lancaster and Telly Savalas. (Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

In 1993, Frankenheimer returned to television, directing HBO's *Against the Wall* and *The Burning Season* (both released in 1994). For the two films, Frankenheimer received two Emmy Awards (including Best Director for *The Burning Season*) and three Golden Globe awards. In 1996, Frankenheimer directed the TNT film *Andersonville*, for which he received another Emmy award. He continued his work for TNT with 1997's *George Wallace*, which earned him his fourth Emmy and the Golden Globe Award for Best Motion Picture Made for Television.

While working in television, Frankenheimer also remained active in feature films. Following the removal of director Richard Stanley, Frankenheimer took over *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1996). Starring Marlon Brando and Val Kilmer, the film was hampered by script and casting problems, and proved to be yet another box-office failure. Frankenheimer's last theatrical releases were *Ronin* (1998) and *Reindeer Games* (2000); his last television movie was HBO's *Paths to War* (2002).

John Frankenheimer died on July 8, 2002, following complications from surgery in Los Angeles.

Selected Filmography

Reindeer Games (2000); *Ronin* (1998); *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1996); *Year of the Gun* (1991); *The Fourth War* (1990); *Dead Bang* (1989); *52 Pick-Up* (1986); *The Holcroft Covenant* (1985); *The Challenge* (1982); *Prophecy* (1979); *Black Sunday* (1977); *French Connection II* (1975); *99 and 44/100% Dead* (1974); *The Iceman Cometh* (1973); *Story of a Love Story* (1973); *The Horsemen* (1971); *I Walk the Line* (1970); *The Extraordinary Seaman* (1969); *The Gypsy Moths* (1969); *The Fixer* (1968); *Grand Prix* (1966); *Seconds* (1966); *The Train* (1964); *Seven Days in May* (1964); *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962); *Birdman of Alcatraz* (1962); *All Fall Down* (1962); *The Young Savages* (1961); *The Young Stranger* (1957)

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—Robert W. Malick

FRIEDKIN, WILLIAM. Unevenness characterizes the career of American director William Friedkin. He is best known for the highly influential films *The French Connection* (1971) and *The Exorcist* (1973), which revolutionized the respective genres of action and horror. Although the success of these films positioned Friedkin as one of Hollywood's elite directors, his career since their release has been plagued by critical and commercial disappointments.

Friedkin was born in Chicago on August 29, 1935, and grew up in a lower-middle-class neighborhood. As an adolescent, he had brushes with the law; growing concerned, his hardworking mother intervened and helped turn him in the right direction. Although his father was multitalented, he lacked ambition, a trait that seems to have motivated young William to make something of himself (Biskind, 1998). Moved by the work of Orson Welles and others, he began working his way up from the mailroom at a local television station. He went on to direct several documentary projects, most notably, *The People Versus Paul Crump* (1962). A taut film about a black man on death row, the documentary won top prize at the 1962 San Francisco Film Festival.

Friedkin continued making documentaries in Chicago, using the experience to hone his trademark visual style (Clagett, 1990). He eventually made his way to Hollywood, but his first feature did not draw on his skills as a documentarian. *Good Times* (1967) was a musical comedy starring Sonny and Cher that sought to capitalize on the success of the Beatles' *A Hard Day's Night*, but which was largely ignored. He followed with more ambitious projects: the period musical *The Night They Raided Minsky's*; a film adaptation of Harold Pinter's play *The Birthday Party*; and an adaptation of Mart Crowley's Off-Broadway play *The Boys in the Band* (Katz, 2001).

The gritty crime drama *The French Connection* (1971) was an aesthetic departure from his earlier films and signaled his turn toward hyperkinetic, sensory experience at the expense of narrative and character development (Saeli, 1997). Remembered for its landmark car chase and morally ambiguous cop protagonists, the film brought Friedkin an Oscar for Best Director. Its \$26 million domestic gross (on a \$1.8 million budget) afforded Friedkin a certain industry clout, of which he took full advantage in 1973 while making *The Exorcist* (Biskind, 1998). The now notorious horror film, about a pubescent girl possessed by the devil, became a runaway box-office hit; rumors about the long and bloated production, mixed reviews from critics, and a limited initial release, it seems, could not halt the film's word-of-mouth (Klemesrud, 1974).

Friedkin's next film, *Sorcerer* (1977), was a remake of Henri-Georges Clouzot's *Wages of Fear*. Unfortunately for Friedkin, its release coincided with that of another blockbuster, George Lucas's *Star Wars*. *Sorcerer* flopped at the box office, and it marked the beginning of a string of unsuccessful films directed by Friedkin: *The Brink's Job*, *Cruising*, and *Deal of the Century*. *Cruising* (1980), an erotic thriller starring Al Pacino, drew attention from several groups that protested its negative depiction of homosexuality, and Friedkin was forced to cut a good number of scenes in order to secure an R-rating (Williams, 2005). While one might expect that Friedkin's brand of gut-reaction filmmaking would be perfect for the erotic thriller, his attempt to replicate the "sexy violence" formula popularized by Brian De Palma (*Dressed to Kill*) and perfected by Paul Verhoeven (*Basic Instinct*) in his film *Jade* (1995) failed miserably.

There have been some bright spots in Friedkin's career since his halcyon days in the 1970s—*To Live and Die in L.A.* (1985), *Blue Chips* (1994), *12 Angry Men* (1997), and *Bug* (2006), for example—but he has struggled to regain the status he enjoyed after he released *The French Connection* and *The Exorcist*.

Selected Filmography

Bug (2006); *Hunted, The* (2003); *Rules of Engagement* (2000); *Jade* (1995); *Blue Chips* (1994); *The Guardian* (1990); *Rampage* (1987); *To Live and Die in L.A.* (1985); *Deal of the Century* (1983); *Cruising* (1980); *The Exorcist* (1973); *The French Connection* (1971)

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—Mikal Gaines

GABLE, CLARK. Between 1930 and 1960, Clark Gable was Hollywood's most popular leading man. Women were drawn to his masculine good looks, while men considered him to be the consummate "man's man." Indeed, in the opinion of many, Gable was the sexiest and most talented leading man of all time.

William Clark Gable was born on February 1, 1901, in Cadiz, Ohio, to parents William H. Gable, an oil driller and farmer, and Adeline Hershelman. After Gable's mother died when he was seven months old, he was placed with his uncle Charles Hershelman, who lived in Vernon, Pennsylvania. In 1903, after his father married his second wife, Jennie Dunlap, Gable returned home and the family settled in Hopedale, Ohio. At the age of 14, he was forced to quit high school in order to help support the family. By the time he was 21, he had worked on the family farm, been employed by the B. F. Goodrich Tire factory and had worked with his father in the oil-drilling business. When he was 17, he decided that he wanted to pursue a career in acting after he saw the play *The Bird of Paradise*. In 1922, Gable joined a traveling troupe, the Jewell Players. In 1924, he joined a Portland, Oregon, theater group that was directed by Josephine Dillon, whom Gable married on December 13, 1924. The couple relocated to Hollywood, where Gable secured work as a movie extra. In 1928, he won the lead in the New York City theater production, *Machinal*. By 1930, his marriage to Dillon had ended, and he had returned to Hollywood to perform in the play *The Last Mile*. Shortly thereafter, he signed a contract with MGM that paid him \$350 a week.

Gable's first movie with MGM was the western *The Painted Desert* (1931). That same year he also made his Hollywood debut as a leading man in the film, *Dance, Fools, Dance*, co-starring Joan Crawford. His sex appeal and magnetism quickly made him popular with American movie audiences. Throughout the early 1930s he co-starred in several movies with some of Hollywood's most popular leading ladies, including Marion Davies, Carole Lombard, Jean Harlow, and Helen Hayes. In 1934, he won an Academy Award for his leading role in *It Happened One Night*. By the mid-1930s, Gable was considered Hollywood's most popular leading man. His name alone guaranteed that a movie would become a box-office success. True to form, throughout the latter part of the 1930s Gable starred in several commercial hits,



This movie still shows Clark Gable in the Civil War epic *Gone with the Wind*. Gable left his acting career to join the Army Air Corps during World War II. He served as a tail gunner on raids over Nazi Germany. (Library of Congress)

including *Call of the Wild* (1935), *San Francisco* (1936), *Too Hot to Handle* (1938), and *Idiot's Delight* (1939). In 1939, Gable took on the role of a lifetime when he portrayed Rhett Butler in *Gone with the Wind*. The movie catapulted Gable to superstar status. On March 29, 1939, Gable married his third wife, Carole Lombard. Three years later she was killed in a plane crash. Distraught, Gable enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps in 1942. After he was discharged in June 1945, he returned to acting and resumed his role as Hollywood's favorite leading man. Throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s, Gable starred in several popular movies, including *Adventure* (1945), *The Hucksters* (1947), *Lone Star* (1952), and *Never Let Me Go* (1953). In 1954, he left MGM and became a freelance actor. In 1955, he was hired by Twentieth Century-Fox for the movies *Soldier of Fortune* and *The Tall Men*. He also starred in *Teacher's Pet*

(1958), *But Not for Me* (1959), and *It Started in Naples* (1960) for Paramount Pictures. Gable died of a heart attack in 1960, shortly after finishing *The Misfits*.

For three decades, Gable entertained American movie audiences with his masculine good looks and acting skills. In total, he starred in 67 movies, many of which became box-office successes simply because Gable appeared in them. During his long reign as Hollywood's leading "leading man," Gable embodied what many thought was the ideal of the American male. Women dreamed of being with him, while men dreamed of being him. He died on November 16, 1960, in Los Angeles.

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—Bernadette Zbicki Heiney

GARBO, GRETA. Greta Garbo is considered by many to have been the most glamorous actress in Hollywood during the 1920s and 1930s. Her enormous talents as an actress combined with her distinctively husky voice made her one of the few actresses to transition successfully from silent films to talking movies.

Greta Garbo was born Greta Lovisa Gustafsson on September 18, 1905, in Stockholm, Sweden, to parents Anna Lovisa Karlsson, a homemaker, and Karl Alfred Gustafsson, a landscaper. She was the youngest of the family's three children. When she was 14 years old, her father died of tuberculosis. She was forced to quit school and get a job in order to help support her family. Following her first job as a soap latherer in a barbershop, she was hired as a salesperson at the Paul U. Bergstrom Department Store, where she eventually was asked to appear in short promotional films for the store. In 1922, Garbo was one of seven students admitted to Stockholm's Royal Dramatic Theatre School. That same year, she also appeared as a bathing beauty in E. A. Petschler's film *The Vagabond Baron*. While attending the school, Garbo met director Mauritz Stiller, who in 1924 hired Garbo to portray Countess Elizabeth Dohna in her first silent movie, *The Atonement of Gosta Berling*. In 1925, she moved to the United States with Stiller to work at MGM. She arrived in New York City on July 6, 1925, and, shortly thereafter, posed for a series of photographs taken by Arnold Genthe that appeared in the magazine *Vanity Fair*. She arrived in Hollywood on September 10, 1925, and soon became one of MGM's most popular and lucrative silent movie stars. In 1926, her first American film, *The Torrent*, was released, followed by *The Temptress* in 1927. In both films she was cast in extremely "sexy" parts. In 1927, she co-starred with John Gilbert in the popular movie *Flesh and the Devil*. The actors' on-screen chemistry led to a very public offscreen romantic relationship. The publicity surrounding their relationship was in harsh contrast to Garbo's normally very private personal life. Throughout the remaining years of the 1920s, she continued to star in box-office successes, including *Love* (1927), *The Divine Woman* (1928), *The Mysterious Lady* (1928), *A Woman of Affairs* (1928), *Wild Orchids* (1929), *A Man's Man* (1929) and *The Single Standard* (1929). In 1929, she portrayed Madame Irene Guarri in her last silent movie, *The Kiss*. This was also the last silent movie produced by MGM.

In 1930, MGM released Garbo's first sound movie, *Anna Christie*. Its success inspired MGM to release a second, German-language version. Garbo had demonstrated that she could successfully transition from silent films to talking movies. Throughout the 1930s, she maintained her status as one of Hollywood's most glamorous movie stars. In 1931, she starred with Clark Gable in the box-office hit *Susan Lennox: Her Fall and Rise*. In 1932, she starred in three commercially successful movies: *Mata Hari*, *Grand Hotel*, and *As You Desire Me*. During the latter part of the decade, Garbo starred in several additional popular movies including *Queen Christina* (1933), *The Painted Veil* (1934), *Anna Karenina* (1935), *Camille* (1937), *Conquest* (1937), and *Ninotchka* (1939). In 1941, she starred in what would be her last movie role, *Two-Faced Woman*. Unfortunately, this film would be her only box-office failure.

During her career, Garbo appeared in 11 silent movies and 15 talking movies. She also became the highest-paid actress in Hollywood during the 1930s. Today, Garbo



Greta Garbo embodied romance and mystery in the silent era and the 1930s, playing tragic heroines such as Anna Karenina and Camille. (The Illustrated London News Picture Library)

remains a legend in American cinematic history. She died in a New York hospital on April 15, 1990.

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—Bernadette Zbicki Heiney

GIBSON, MEL. With his leading-man good looks, Mel Gibson enjoyed a meteoric rise to fame. Throughout the years, he has proven himself a master of multiple genres ranging from romantic comedy to action to Shakespeare. Gibson has also forged a strong, albeit sometimes

controversial, career as a director and writer. Although he starred in *Braveheart* (1995), he proved he was much more than an actor by directing the film, which won both Best Picture and Best Director Academy Awards. He later wrote and directed *The Passion of the Christ* (2004) and *Apocalypto* (2006), both of which were extremely violent and steeped in themes of religion and redemption, and which met with controversy upon their release.

Catholicism has always played a strong role in Gibson's life. In fact, Mel Columcille Gerard Gibson, born in Peekskill, New York, on January 3, 1956, was named after three Catholic saints. His parents moved their large family to Sydney, Australia, when Gibson was 12 years old, apparently to save their older sons from being drafted into the Vietnam War. Gibson attended a Catholic high school prior to studying at the National Institute of Dramatic Art at the University of New South Wales. For many years it appeared that he and his wife, Robyn, were a rarity, bucking the trend of the

high Hollywood divorce rate. In a departure from his strong Catholic convictions, the couple—who wed in 1980 and have seven children together—separated in 2006 and divorced in 2009. That same year, Gibson also had a daughter with his girlfriend, Oksana Grigorieva, a singer.

Although he made his film debut in the low-budget surfer flick *Summer City* (1977), Gibson quickly received recognition for *Tim* (1979), a coming-of-age story for which he received the Australian Film Institute Award for Best Actor as the mentally challenged protagonist. Gibson also landed the lead role in *Mad Max* (1979), the first of three films about Max Rockatansky and his fight for survival in a barren, postapocalyptic world. The critically acclaimed sequel, *Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior* (1982), catapulted Gibson to stardom in the United States. A third installment, *Mad Max: Beyond Thunderdome* (1985), was a box-office smash and featured music legend Tina Turner.

Gibson won his second Australian Film Institute best actor award for Peter Weir's *Gallipoli* (1981), a World War I drama that follows its young protagonists in the Gallipoli campaign in Turkey. He teamed up again with Weir for *The Year of Living Dangerously* (1982). Set in Indonesia during a coup d'état in 1965, this was the first Australian film to be fully financed by an American studio, MGM. Gibson continued to tackle dramatic roles throughout the 1980s, starring in films such as *The Bounty* (1984), a remake of *Mutiny on the Bounty*; *The River* (1984), which depicted the struggles of a Tennessee farming family; and, *Mrs. Soffel* (1984), a romantic thriller about inmate brothers who escape prison with help from the warden's wife. He became a household name with *Lethal Weapon* (1987), a buddy film featuring Gibson as the impulsive, self-destructive detective Martin Riggs, and Danny Glover as his partner Roger Murtaugh, the voice of reason. The box-office success of the first film—more



A scene still of actor and director Mel Gibson from *Braveheart*. (Icon/Ladd Co/Paramount/The Kobal Collection)

than \$65 million in U.S. ticket sales—led to three more installments: *Lethal Weapon 2* (1989), *Lethal Weapon 3* (1992), and *Lethal Weapon 4* (1998), each of which was wildly successful. Other Gibson action films include *Tequila Sunrise* (1988), in which he played a drug dealer trying to go straight, and *Payback* (1999), a crime thriller that once again found his character on the wrong side of the law. In the Ron Howard thriller *Ransom* (1996), Gibson portrayed a father desperate to find his young son, who was abducted in Central Park; he went on to play a paranoid New York City cabbie in the thriller *Conspiracy Theory* (1997).

Gibson has tackled comedy in a number of films, including *Bird on a Wire* (1990), *Air America* (1990), *Forever Young* (1992), and the western *Maverick* (1994). He also voiced Captain John Smith in the family-friendly Disney animated feature *Pocahontas* (1995). His humorous turn as a chauvinistic, womanizing advertising executive who suddenly can hear the innermost thoughts and desires of women in *What Women Want* (2000) came on the heels of a \$25 million paycheck for *The Patriot* (2000). That same year, he voiced the rooster Rocky Rhodes in *Chicken Run*, a claymation feature. Each of his three 2000 releases earned more than \$100 million. In 2002, Gibson starred in two films: *We Were Soldiers*, based on the true story of the first major battle of the Vietnam War; and, *Signs*, a sci-fi blockbuster directed by M. Night Shyamalan that featured Gibson as a former minister who has lost his faith and must help his family deal with an alien invasion.

Gibson made his directorial debut with the touching drama *The Man without a Face* (1993), in which he also starred. His directing prowess was acknowledged with *Braveheart* (1995), an epic period piece about William Wallace and the thirteenth-century Scottish fight for freedom from England. *Braveheart* received a total of 10 Academy Award nominations, was named Best Picture, and walked away with Oscars for cinematography, makeup and sound effects editing. Gibson took home the Oscar for Best Director. His devout faith came to the forefront in his next foray into directing, *The Passion of the Christ* (2004). Filmed in Latin and Aramaic, this labor of love depicting the final 12 hours of the life of Jesus Christ proved extremely controversial due to its incredibly graphic, and extra-canonical portrayal of the Passion and what some took to be Gibson's racist representations of Jews—it also did not help that Gibson implied that, like his father, he was sympathetic with the cause of Holocaust deniers. Charges of anti-Semitism were further fueled by remarks that Gibson made following his 2006 arrest for drunk driving—he has intermittently battled alcohol issues for years—for which he subsequently apologized. His next undertaking as a writer/director was the similarly controversial *Apocalypto* (2006), a bloody account of the downfall of Mayan civilization filmed in the dialect of Yucatec, which drove home the theme of redemption. The action movie *Edge of Darkness* (2010) marked Gibson's return to acting following an eight-year hiatus from the big screen.

Selected Filmography

Edge of Darkness (2010); *Paparazzi* (2004); *The Singing Detective* (2003); *Signs* (2002); *We Were Soldiers* (2002); *What Women Want* (2000); *The Patriot* (2000); *Chicken Run* (2000); *Payback* (1999/I); *Lethal Weapon 4* (1998); *Conspiracy Theory* (1997); *Fathers' Day* (1997);

Ransom (1996); *Pocahontas* (1995); *Braveheart* (1995); *Maverick* (1994); *The Man without a Face* (1993); *Lethal Weapon 3* (1992); *Hamlet* (1990); *Air America* (1990); *Bird on a Wire* (1990); *Lethal Weapon 2* (1989); *Tequila Sunrise* (1988); *Lethal Weapon* (1987); *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome* (1985); *Mrs. Soffel* (1984); *The River* (1984); *The Bounty* (1984); *The Year of Living Dangerously* (1982); *Attack Force Z* (1982); *Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior* (1981); *Gallipoli* (1981); *Tim* (1979); *Mad Max* (1979); *Summer City* (1977); *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden* (1977)

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—Michele Camardella

GISH, LILLIAN. The career of Lillian Gish spanned 75 years, during which she made 105 films. As "the first lady of the silent screen," Gish is credited with inventing modern film acting. Her restrained style completely differed from the exaggerated style typical of stage actors at the time. Born in Springfield, Ohio, on October 14, 1893, film and Gish came into the world at approximately the same time. Her father abandoned the family, leaving them destitute. Lillian, her sister Dorothy, and her mother resorted to acting, enduring the social stigma associated with the profession. Lillian's stage career began at age eight in touring companies. Hers was a lonely youth often living separated from her family, in squalid conditions, undernourished, with little opportunity for schooling.

Childhood friend Mary Pickford introduced the Gish sisters to D. W. Griffith. The sisters' film debut came in Griffith's *An Unseen Enemy* (1912). Film acting kept the family together and brought a modicum of economic stability. Together, Griffith and Lillian made over two dozen films, including the infamous *Birth of a Nation* (1915) and *Intolerance* (1916). Devoted to Griffith from the time they began working together, Gish ardently defended him against claims of racism over *Birth of a Nation*. Despite this controversy, she and Griffith dedicated their careers to making film a respected art.

Typecast as the fragile, ethereal beauty at the mercy of men and nature, Gish starred primarily in melodramas. Her virginal, childlike beauty represented the American ideal of femininity at the time. While Gish resented the victim typecast, according to biographer Charles Affron, "Lillian's success had been and would continue to be predicated



In 1915 Gish rose to stardom as Elsie Stoneman in the controversial film *The Birth of a Nation*, directed by D. W. Griffith. (Library of Congress)

on her illusory subservience to strong men, a posture that furthered her own ambitions" (138).

Withstanding WWI air raids, the Gishes and Griffith made films in Europe including the war-mongering *Hearts of the World* (1918). Later, regretting making this film, she committed herself to pacifism.

After the war, notable films of this "Biograph girl" included *Broken Blossoms* (1919); *Way Down East* (1919); and *Orphans of the Storm* (1922). Gish's directorial debut was *Remodeling Her Husband* (1920). After its release, she insisted that directing was men's work, so instead she invested her own money in Inspiration Pictures, making two successful films overseas, *The White Sister* (1923) and *Romola* (1924). In 1925, she left Griffith, accepting a contract from MGM for \$800,000. Along with this astounding sum, Gish earned unprecedented power, especially for a woman, to choose projects, directors, and co-stars. Her most notable MGM films were *La Bohème* (1926), *The Scarlet Letter* (1926), and *The Wind* (1928).

Unlike many actors, Gish successfully transitioned from silent cinema to "talkies" in *One Romantic Night* (1930). Yet, with her youth fading, she left Hollywood, resuming a stage career. In 1948, she transitioned to television. She continued to work in theatre, film, radio, and television throughout her life. Her later film career included *Duel in the Sun* (1946), for which she received an Academy Award nomination; *The Night of the Hunter* (1955); *The Unforgiven* (1960); *The Comedians* (1967), for which she received a Golden Globe nomination; and her final film, *The Whales of August* (1987).

Insisting she was not a feminist, Gish nevertheless offered a nontraditional example of femininity as a single career woman. Much was made of her choice not to marry or have children. She rejected several proposals, insisting marriage and career did not mix—and she preferred her career. Gish was a social and political conservative known

for her work ethic, social propriety, and devotion to family. In 1941, she preached isolationism at antiwar rallies and on radio as a member of the America First Committee. Some considered her antiwar stance unpatriotic; realizing her career was in jeopardy, she resigned her membership. Although not involved in the House Un-American Activities Committee, Gish feared communism's threat and the role of film in spreading this ideology. She saw films as dangerous instruments of propaganda and spoke of the moral responsibility of the arts to all who would listen. A lifelong Republican, she lobbied government to create a cabinet-level post for the arts and for film preservation funding.

Gish received an honorary Academy Award in 1971, Kennedy Center Honors in 1982, and a Life Achievement Award from the American Film Institute in 1984. She died a film legend, on February 27, 1993, bequeathing millions in continued support of the arts.

See also: Birth of a Nation, The; Griffith, D. W.

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—Jamie Capuzza

GRANT, CARY. For more than four decades, Cary Grant was one of Hollywood's most popular leading men. His self-created persona defined the sophisticated leading man for generations. Most popular in the genre of the romantic comedy, Grant obtained a level of superstardom that remains intact today.

Cary Grant was born Alexander Archibald Leach on January 18, 1904, in Bristol, Great Britain. He was raised as an only child by his parents Elias J. Leach, a factory worker, and Elsie Kingdom Leach. His parents had previously lost their first child, John, in 1899; and his mother, who never fully recovered from the loss, was institutionalized when Grant was nine years old. He spent his teenage years being raised by his father. Grant attended the Bishop Road Boys School in Bristol until he won a scholarship to the Fairfield Secondary School in Somerset in 1915. Three years later, when he was 14 years old, he quit school and joined the John Pender Comedy Troupe. In 1920, he traveled to the United States with the troupe to perform in New York City at the Globe Theater. When the troupe returned to Great Britain, Grant remained in New York City and took a job with the Steeplechase Amusement Park on Coney Island as a stilt walker. In 1927, he was hired for a role in the play *Golden Dawn*, on Broadway. Although the play was only a marginal success, it afforded him the opportunity to acquire other acting jobs on Broadway.

In 1931, Grant signed a contract with Paramount Pictures. That same year, he made his acting debut in the movie *Singapore Sue* and also began to use exclusively Cary Grant as his professional name. An instant Hollywood success, Grant quickly rose to superstar status. His on-screen persona epitomized America's image of what a handsome and sophisticated Hollywood movie star should be. Throughout the 1930s, he co-starred in several pictures alongside some of Hollywood's most famous leading ladies. In 1933, he starred in two movies with Mae West, *She Done Him Wrong* and *I'm No Angel*. In 1936, he co-starred with Katharine Hepburn in the film *Sylvia Scarlett*, and in 1937 with Irene Dunne in the box-office hit *The Awful Truth*. Grant co-starred with Hepburn in several other popular movies during the latter part of the 1930s, including *Bringing Up Baby* (1938), *Holiday* (1938), and *The Philadelphia Story* (1940). He also starred in numerous romantic comedies, including the hits *Thirty-Day Princess* (1934), *Kiss and Make-Up* (1935), and *Wedding Present* (1936). By the end of the decade, Grant had found his niche in romantic comedy feature films.

In 1942, he became a U.S. citizen and legally changed his name to Cary Grant. During the 1940s, some of his most successful comedies included *His Girl Friday* (1940), *The Talk of the Town* (1942), *Arsenic and Old Lace* (1944), and *Mr. Blandings Builds a Dream House* (1948). Surprisingly, it was his performance in the drama *Penny Serenade* (1941) that earned him his first Academy Award nomination. He earned a second nomination in 1944 for his role in the drama *None but the Lonely Heart*. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, he continued to excel in the romantic comedy genre. Some of the more notable pictures in which he starred during this period included *Monkey Business* (1952), *An Affair to Remember* (1957), *That Touch of Mink* (1962), and *Father Goose* (1964).

Although the romantic comedy had become his specialty, Grant had the opportunity to explore more dramatic roles in four Alfred Hitchcock films. In 1941, he was cast as Johnnie, a husband who appeared to be trying to murder his wife, in *Suspicion*. His success in *Suspicion* led to roles in three additional Hitchcock films: *Notorious* (1946), *To Catch a Thief* (1955) and *North by Northwest* (1959). In 1966, Grant took on his last movie role before retiring, starring in the romantic comedy *Walk, Don't Run*.

For more than 40 years, the name Cary Grant was synonymous with the Hollywood romantic comedy. He entertained American movie audiences with both his acting skills and his sophisticated charm. This sophistication ultimately became America's definition of an elegant gentleman. He died on November 29, 1986, but is still considered one of Hollywood's most popular leading men.

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—Bernadette Zbicki Heiney

GRIER, PAM. Pam Grier, the “Queen of Blaxploitation,” not only revolutionized the way women in general are portrayed on-screen but, more specifically, how African American women are portrayed. In the 1970s she became one of the first African American female superheroes, garnering fame, fans, and of course, critics.

Born Pamela Suzette Grier on May 26, 1949, in North Carolina, Grier spent most of her early years living on multiple Air Force bases with her family. Her father and mother, an Air Force mechanic and a nurse respectively, were the parents to four children. When Grier was nine years old, her family finally settled in Denver. Having become accustomed to the middle-class lifestyle she experienced on military bases, Grier later stated that she felt ostracized in the primarily black and working-class neighborhood in which she found herself in Colorado.

Grier’s film career began when Roger Corman cast her in *The Big Doll House* in 1971. The small role led to several other supporting appearances in *The Arena* (1971), *Black Mama/White Mama* (1972), and *The Big Bird Cage* (1972), and ultimately led to her signing a five-year contract with the production company American International Pictures.

In the 1970s, a new genre of film, dubbed “blaxploitation” because it featured African American actors in exploitative roles, became popular among urban African American audiences. These films featured mostly African American male protagonists living out urban action-adventure narratives supported by the hippest clothes and music of the times. These male-centered narratives were expanded when Pam Grier was cast in *Coffy*.

Directed by Jack Hill, *Coffy* was released in 1973. The stunning, sexy Grier starred as a seemingly demure nurse who, after her sister is put into a comma from a drug overdose, dons skin-tight clothing and holstered guns and proceeds to wreck uber-violent revenge on the neighborhood drug dealers. The film earned \$8 million for the studio and fame for Grier.

As a result of her performance in *Coffy*, Grier was cast in several more blaxploitation films. In 1974, she starred in *Foxy Brown* as a woman who poses as a prostitute in order to avenge her boyfriend’s death; in 1975, she starred in *Friday Foster* as a fashion photographer trying to stop an assassination attempt on African American politicians; and in what turned out to be her final film for AIP, 1975’s *Sheba Baby*, Grier portrayed a private eye who protects her father, whose business is being threatened by the mob. In all of these films, Grier’s beauty—and body—was highlighted as much as her acting and action skills. While this intentionally exploitative formula attracted millions of moviegoers, it also made her the target of a great deal of criticism.

Her fans and a good number of film critics applauded Grier for bringing a new kind of African American woman to the screen. They contended that, first and foremost, Grier broke down barriers for actresses, and more specifically for African American actresses. Not only did she earn starring roles and huge salaries (she was one of the highest-paid actresses in the 1970s), but ultimately the power to shape what kind of characters she would play. Supporters of Grier argued that her performances—with their expression of overt sexuality, beauty, and physical and emotional strength—acted to break down negative stereotypes of African American women (especially that of the

“mammy,” the desexualized mother figure). This appealed not only to white feminists in the 1970s, who featured her on the cover of *Ms.* magazine, but also to the growing Black Power movement, which stressed race pride. Grier, they proclaimed, had redefined the public image of black female beauty, bringing Afros and black skin to posters all over America.

Blaxploitation films, however, were unpopular with many leaders in the black community because they portrayed African Americans as violent, oversexed criminals. These leaders also criticized the films for what they believed was their lack of positive social messages. Grier’s roles, especially, were attacked by many black feminists as merely filmic depictions of African American women as sexual objects.

Ultimately Grier’s career stalled with the demise of blaxploitation films. In the 1970s and 1980s, she made a number of unmemorable films—*Greased Lightning* (1977), *Fort Apache: the Bronx* (1981), *Above the Law* (1988), and *The Package* (1989), for example. Her career was revived in 1995, however, when Quentin Tarantino cast the still stunning, 45-year-old Grier in his homage to blaxploitation films, *Jackie Brown*. In *Jackie Brown*, Grier was cast as a beautiful, strong, self-possessed woman—who happens to be African American—who faces down drug dealers and manipulators. After making this film, and attracting a whole new generation of film fans, Grier went on to play numerous television roles and to star in the hit Showtime cable series *The L Word* (2004).

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—Katharine Bausch

GRIFFITH, D. W. Born on January 22, 1875, David Wark Griffith has long been considered the founder of American cinema as a serious art form. His extraordinarily controversial 1915 Civil War epic, *The Birth of a Nation*, was shown in theatres for the amazing price of two dollars a ticket, with musical accompaniment by a full orchestra; it was also the first moving picture screened in the White House. On a commercial level, he was a pioneer of the feature film—as opposed to the mass-market two-reelers that were standard fare at the time—and helped to create some of the first movie stars, including Lillian and Dorothy Gish, and Mae Marsh.

Born in Kentucky a decade after the end of the Civil War, Griffith was the son of Jacob Wark Griffith, a Confederate Army veteran. Although Jacob died when Griffith

was only 10 years old, it seems that he had already passed along to his son a taste for Victorian Age romanticism and fierce pride in his Southern identity. Jacob's death left his widow, the former Mary Perkins Oglesby, to care for their two children by herself. Unable to keep their farm afloat and overwhelmed by debt, Mary moved the family to Louisville, where she opened a boardinghouse, which also failed. The family's misfortunes eventually forced Griffith to drop out of school and take a job in a dry goods store; later, he took a job in a bookstore, where he embarked on a course of interdisciplinary self-study.

Griffith was nearly 25 years old when the cinema began to emerge and 30 when it was still in its primitive, nickelodeon stage. Thus, it was the theatre



Film director D. W. Griffith. (Library of Congress)

and stage plays that formed him, in particular the Victorian melodrama, which supplied him with the narrative archetypes for his films. Griffith eventually began selling scripts to the Biograph Company, a major studio of the silent era, and began to act in early films. He soon started directing—making numerous one- and two-reelers—and gathering together a company of actors and technicians, most notably the pioneering cameraman Billy Bitzer. Making his many film shorts allowed Griffith to experiment with diverse source material, locations, techniques, and methods of storytelling. The prolific director ultimately made more than 450 short films with Biograph, which constituted an important part of the work of his early career. He concentrated on making domestic melodramas (*The Painted Lady*, 1912); urban dramas (*The Lily of the Tenement*, 1911); and adaptations of the literary works of authors such as Jack London and Frank Norris (*A Corner in Wheat*, 1909). One of his best known two-reelers, *The Musketeers of Pig Alley* (1912)—now celebrated for its brilliant technique—is considered the first crime movie.

The success of an Italian adaptation of the Roman epic *Quo Vadis?* demonstrated both the artistic and commercial potential of longer motion pictures. Griffith's first attempt at the new form was a Biblical epic, *Judith of Bethulia* (1913), an adaptation of a play written by the popular writer Thomas Bailey Aldrich. The film starred Blanche Sweet, and featured the actresses who would later become stars while working

with Griffith, Mae Marsh and the Gish sisters. The film combined two elements that Griffith would use again in his other great epics, spectacular battle scenes and the depiction of more intimate expressions of pathos, especially from vulnerable, virtuous women. Resistant to long features, Biograph delayed the release of the film, perhaps for budgetary reasons—the picture reputedly cost an unprecedented \$50,000—or because of doubts about the public's patience for multireel films. Nevertheless, the film was well received when it was released. Angry at the studio's lack of support, Griffith decided to leave Biograph, taking with him his stock company; he soon began working on what would become his most important and most controversial film, *The Birth of a Nation*.

Technically brilliant, *The Birth of a Nation* was an adaptation of Thomas Dixon's novel *The Clansman*. A paean to the eighteenth-century Ku Klux Klan, Griffith's film at least seemed to suggest that the latter-day formation of such a group was the last best hope for saving white America. Despite its controversial subject matter, the picture was initially well received when it premiered in New York City; Dixon even talked then-president Woodrow Wilson into screening *Birth of a Nation* in the White House. Many Americans, though, felt that the film was racist, a charge with which Griffith would have to contend for the remainder of his career.

Perhaps in response to these accusations of racism following the release of *Birth of a Nation*, Griffith produced the monumental *Intolerance* in 1916. Made up of four narrative threads—stories concerning the Passion of the Christ, ancient Babylon, the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, and then-contemporary issues of injustice and redemption—*Intolerance* sought to explore "love's struggle through the ages." As the title implies, the separate narratives are linked by the theme of intolerance, and they progressively converge to form a masterful mosaic. While *Intolerance* was the most expensive movie made to that point in time, it did not match the success of *Birth of a Nation*. Griffith's insistence, it seems, on building up a complex filmic structure supported by four narrative strands, coupled with his decision to crosscut among these narratives with little if any explanation, made the film too intricately demanding for almost all audiences.

At this point, Griffith's career entered another major phase, as he made a series of films focusing on characters played by Lillian Gish: *True Heart Susie* (1919), *Broken Blossoms* (1919), *Way Down East* (1920), and *Orphans of the Storm* (1921)—which also starred Gish's sister, Dorothy. Although these films were not as materially ambitious as pictures like *Birth of a Nation* and *Intolerance*, they had a dramatic sensibility that the earlier, epic films lacked. The latter three films are all domestic melodramas played out against evocative backdrops (slum, nature, historical turbulence), with visually arresting images that are romantic and genuinely poetic. Although there is typically a male romantic lead who may or may not be successful in rescuing an endangered woman, the female protagonists in these films are clearly the dominant figures. Much of this is no doubt a result of Gish's strong characterization; but some of it must also be attributed to Griffith's skills as a "woman's director," one who was able consistently to draw powerful performances from the actresses with whom he worked.

More than just an extraordinarily talented director, Griffith also contributed to organizing American cinema as an industry. Along with Mary Pickford, Douglas

Fairbanks, and Charlie Chaplin, Griffith was one of the founding partners of United Artists, which ultimately became a major studio. As was his habit, though, Griffith quickly grew restless, and he chose to leave UA; his professional relationship with Lillian Gish also began to deteriorate at this time, and the two finally stopped working with each other altogether. After his break with Gish, Griffith's work went into artistic and commercial decline. Trying to rekindle the magic he had developed with Gish, he turned to another leading lady, Carol Dempster, but she proved to be a far from satisfactory replacement for the ethereal Gish. Experimenting with story formulas in films like *America* and *Isn't Life Wonderful?* (both 1924) did not help matters, either, and Griffith closed his career with an uninspired biographical picture about Abraham Lincoln. Never having accumulated the wealth that others in the industry had been able to gather, Griffith lived out his life in Hollywood, a man of modest means. He died on July 23, 1948, at the age of 73, and was buried near his birthplace in Kentucky.

Selected Filmography

The Struggle (1931); *Lady of the Pavements* (1929); *The Battle of the Sexes* (1928); *Drums of Love* (1928); *The Sorrows of Satan* (1926); *That Royle Girl* (1925); *Sally of the Sawdust* (1925); *Isn't Life Wonderful* (1924); *America* (1924); *The White Rose* (1923); *Mammy's Boy* (1923); *One Exciting Night* (1922); *Orphans of the Storm* (1921); *The Mother and the Law* (1919); *The Fall of Babylon* (1919); *True Heart Susie* (1919); *Broken Blossoms or The Yellow Man and the Girl* (1919); *The Girl Who Stayed at Home* (1919); *A Romance of Happy Valley* (1919); *The World of Columbus* (1919); *The Greatest Thing in Life* (1918); *The Great Love* (1918); *Hearts of the World* (1918); *Intolerance: Love's Struggle Throughout the Ages* (1916); *The Birth of a Nation* (1915); *The Avenging Conscience: or "Thou Shalt Not Kill"* (1914); *The Escape* (1914); *Home, Sweet Home* (1914); *The Primitive Man* (1914); *The Battle of the Sexes* (1914); *Judith of Bethulia* (1914); *The Massacre* (1914); *The Battle at Elderbush Gulch* (1913)

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—Dimitri Keramitas

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HAWKS, HOWARD. Since the 1960s, Howard Hawks has been recognized as a great artist, a true auteur of international cinema. By his own admission, however, he was a diverse and unabashedly commercial director, with a gift for discerning what film audiences liked. He worked in all major American film genres, most notably gangster, screwball comedy, film noir, and westerns. Of the 47 films he is officially credited with having directed, his reputation rests on 10, a number that could readily be expanded by scholars and critics who continue to reevaluate his work, believing that additional films deserve further scrutiny. The films for which he is best known and which continue to garner critical attention are *Scarface* (1932), *Bringing Up Baby* (1938), *Only Angels Have Wings* (1939), *His Girl Friday* (1940), *Sergeant York* (1941), *To Have And Have Not* (1944), *The Big Sleep* (1946), *Red River* (1948), *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953), and *Rio Bravo* (1959).

A distinctive characteristic of a Howard Hawks film is overlapping dialogue, in which one or more persons speak before another has completely finished. It was a device that became a sort of trademark, giving pace, energy, and forward movement to dialogue sequences. It often enhanced comedy, as in the three person “trialogue” in *His Girl Friday*, in which Cary Grant, Rosalind Russell, and Ralph Bellamy conduct a decidedly hectic but completely comprehensible conversation. The overlapping dialogue could also further the sense of tension in an action film, evident in the conversations that take place among scientists and military men in *The Thing from Another World* (1951). (It should be noted that the credited director of this science-fiction thriller is Christian Nyby, but Nyby had never directed before, and the directorial hand of the producer, Hawks, is readily apparent throughout.) Another characteristic was his avoidance of complex camera work, such as sweeping panoramas, dolly or crane shots, and other forms of cinematography that he felt distracted from or at least did not add to his story. He favored eye-level camera placement, and his films, more often than not, took place indoors.

Born in Goshen, Indiana, on May 30, 1896, Hawks was a child of wealth and privilege who readily availed himself of all the advantages of such good fortune. He was schooled at exclusive Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire and later at Cornell,

where he studied engineering. In the early 1920s, he became intrigued with Hollywood. Following the whim of the dilettante rather than any calculated career plan, he worked college summers at Famous Players-Lasky (later Paramount Studios), starting out as an assistant prop man, and quickly rising to associate producer and writer, turning out silent screen scenarios, and editing those of others.

The story of his rise in the industry, particularly the early part of his career, is open to interpretation. Hawks was known as an unrelenting teller of tall tales, and seemed to take a certain perverse delight in "rewriting" his life story. His version of his experiences over the years, related in numerous interviews, often varies in detail. His account of his life and his film industry successes is consistent, however, in that it presents Hawks as a man who won all the arguments with studio executives and triumphed in all significant conflicts. Undoubtedly there is some exaggeration, but to his credit, little contradictory evidence to the facts as he presented them. He was admired by those who worked with him, and his many talents were recognized and appreciated from the beginning. He was a true independent, a director who early in his career served as his own producer, and never hesitated to rewrite a script or change a set if he deemed it necessary. Allowing directors such latitude was highly unusual in the days of the studio system; Hawks, though, resisted attempts by producers to control the filmmaking process. Indeed, he usually signed contracts to direct only one or two pictures for any single studio at a time.

Hawks was particularly adept at recognizing and seizing opportunities. When an art director at Famous Players was unavailable to create a modern set requested by Douglas Fairbanks, the studio's biggest star of the silent era, Hawks volunteered to design and build it. He had had some training in architecture at Cornell, and his success with this venture led to the development of a strong friendship with Fairbanks. By his own account, Hawks was an excellent golfer and a skilled tennis player, attributes that impressed Fairbanks, Hollywood's reigning hero of swashbuckling adventure films and a man who took great pride in doing his own film stunts. The friendship with Fairbanks led the latter to recommend Hawks to Mary Pickford, one of the most prominent stars of the silent screen, and, at the time, Fairbanks's fiancée. Hawks seized another opportunity when one day the director of one of Pickford's films did not appear on the set as scheduled. The supremely confident Hawks volunteered to step in and direct the scenes scheduled to be shot that day, allowing the studio to avoid costly delays. Building on this first foray into directing, he moved into producing and writing stories and scenarios for films that he would go on to direct.

During World War I, Hawks served in the Signal Corps, gaining extensive experience with airplanes. He developed a lifelong interest in aviation, an enthusiasm that informed his direction of action-adventure films with aviation themes, including *The Air Circus* (1928), *The Dawn Patrol* (1930), *Ceiling Zero* (1936), *Only Angels Have Wings* (1939), and *Air Force* (1943). Inherently fond of risk, he had a similar passion for auto racing; in fact, for a time he designed racing cars and drove professionally. These experiences found their way into films such as *The Crowd Roars* (1932) and *Red Line 7000* (1965). In the years between 1926 and 1929, Hawks directed eight full-length motion pictures: *The Road to Glory* (1926), *Fig Leaves* (1926), *The Cradle*

Snatcher (1927), *Paid to Love* (1927), *A Girl in Every Port* (1928), *Fazil* (1928) *The Air Circus* (1928), and *Trent's Last Case* (1929). Of these eight films directed prior to the advent of sound, only *A Girl in Every Port* has merited any critical attention, largely because of the engaging performances by Victor McLaglen and Robert Armstrong, who played career sailors living in a Hawksian man's world, unencumbered by domesticity and doing what a man's got to do—in this case, getting drunk and pursuing women.

In *A Girl in Every Port*, McLaglen's character, Spike, momentarily succumbs to the allure of domesticity but quickly recovers his senses, forsaking an impending marriage with Marie (Louise Brooks). Interestingly, in *His Girl Friday*, the formidable Hildy Johnson (Rosalind Russell) sidesteps her impending marriage so that she might continue unfettered in her career in journalism as the ace reporter working for her less-than-scrupulous editor, former husband Walter Burns (Cary Grant). In the original play, written by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur, Hildy ("Hildebrand") Johnson was a male role, which was also the case in the 1931 film version of the play directed by Lewis Milestone. In his remake, however, Hawks changed the title, and, in an inspired moment, changed the role of Hildy to a woman. In the end, she becomes a Hawksian woman, talented, strong-willed, but one who discovers that what she really wants in life is to follow her man—the right man—please him, and ask few, if any questions.

Hawks had a very distinct idea of how he wanted to portray women in his films. The female protagonists in Hawks's action films were largely devoid of the attributes of conventional femininity—they were also completely comfortable in a man's world. Sophisticated, confident, and self-possessed, they were complementary figures able to engage and hold their own in exchanges with their male counterparts. Once they recognized that certain men were worthy of them, however, they quietly and unconditionally surrendered themselves to these men. Hawks, it seems, began to develop this idea of the strong/compliant filmic woman during the 1930s, giving inchoate expression to it in *Only Angels Have Wings* (1939), where Bonnie Lee (Jean Arthur) discovers, after tears, confusion, and a great deal of frustration, precisely what she has to do to snare Geoff Carter (Cary Grant): "I'm hard to get, Geoff," she says, "all you have to do is ask me." Seemingly quite pleased with this terse expression of surrender, Hawks has Vivian Rutledge (Lauren Bacall) utter the same words to Philip Marlowe (Humphrey Bogart) in *The Big Sleep*, and Feathers (Angie Dickinson) speaks a variant of the declaration to Sheriff John T. Chance (John Wayne) in *Rio Bravo*. It may be argued, though, that the Hawksian woman achieves her fullest expression in Hawks's adaptation of Ernest Hemingway's *To Have and Have Not*. Casting 19-year-old model Lauren Bacall in her first screen role as Marie Browning, Hawks fashioned her character after his current wife, socialite Nancy Gross, whom the tall, slightly gaunt, beautiful, and seductively clever Bacall resembled somewhat. Hawks even gave the Bacall character the nickname "Slim," his term of endearment for his wife. Playing opposite her future husband Humphrey Bogart—the pair absolutely sizzled on the screen—Bacall embodied the Hawks woman: dangerously attractive, mouthy, and, in the end, totally devoted to her man.

Not surprisingly, the men in Hawks's action films are bulwarks of conventional masculinity, idealized and mythic. Hawks stressed the theme of "professionalism" in these action pictures: men—real men—recognized that they had jobs to do, and they set out in single-minded fashion to do them. Fear, doubt, or any other emotion that might undermine a man's confidence and determination had no place in the makeup of the Hawksian hero. If you were a professional, if you were good enough, you did the job or died honorably in the attempt. Nowhere is this ideal more powerfully expressed than in *Rio Bravo*, a picture that Hawks admitted was a response to Fred Zinnemann's 1952 film *High Noon*. Hawks—and star John Wayne—could not abide the Zinnemann characterization of Sheriff Will Kane (Gary Cooper) as a figure who is not good enough to deal with crazed killers by himself or wise enough to hire professionals to help him with the job. When Wayne's Sheriff John T. Chance is asked if wants to deputize some ranch hands, he brusquely rejects the idea: "Well-meaning amateurs," he says, "most of them worried about their wives and kids."

Significantly, Hawks is the only notable director in American cinema to have given audiences an acknowledged classic motion picture in four of the primary film genres that define American cinema. *Scarface* would certainly be in the top five of any film scholar's list of significant American films in the gangster genre. *Bringing Up Baby* and *His Girl Friday* are Hawks's definitive contributions to screwball comedy, pairing Katharine Hepburn in the first and Rosalind Russell in the second with the redoubtable Cary Grant. *The Big Sleep* is quintessential noir, while *Red River* rivals the films of the man many consider to be the undisputed master of the American western, John Ford.

In his last two films, *El Dorado* (1966) and *Rio Lobo* (1970), Hawks once again gave expression to his ideas concerning heroic men, "professionals" acting out their predestined roles as communal saviors. These pictures, though, proved to be little more than thinly veiled remakes of *Rio Bravo*, none of which, most would agree, compared to *Red River*, perhaps his best film in the western genre and one of his best films generally. An iconic figure in the cinematic world, Howard Hawks died on December 26, 1977, at the age of 81 in Palm Springs, California.

Selected Filmography

Rio Lobo (1970); *El Dorado* (1966); *Red Line 7000* (1965); *Man's Favorite Sport?* (1964); *Hatari!* (1962); *Rio Bravo* (1959); *Land of the Pharaohs* (1955); *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953); *Monkey Business* (1952); *The Big Sky* (1952); *The Thing from Another World* (1951); *I Was a Male War Bride* (1949); *A Song Is Born* (1948); *Red River* (1948); *The Big Sleep* (1946); *To Have and Have Not* (1944); *Air Force* (1943); *Ball of Fire* (1941); *Sergeant York* (1941); *His Girl Friday* (1940); *Only Angels Have Wings* (1939); *Bringing Up Baby* (1938); *Come and Get It* (1936); *The Road to Glory* (1936); *Ceiling Zero* (1936); *Barbary Coast* (1935); *Twentieth Century* (1934); *The Prizefighter and the Lady* (1933); *Today We Live* (1933); *Tiger Shark* (1932); *The Crowd Roars* (1932); *Scarface* (1932); *The Criminal Code* (1931); *The Dawn Patrol* (1930)

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—Richard C. Keenan

HECKERLING, AMY. Amy Heckerling, one of the few female movie directors to achieve both commercial and critical success, is perhaps best known for films that provide audiences with sharp insights into teen life.

Heckerling was born May 7, 1954, in the New York City borough of the Bronx. She attended the High School of Art and Design, a public school in Manhattan. She graduated from New York University in 1975 and immediately enrolled in the prestigious American Film Institute (AFI) in California. A film she completed at AFI caught the attention of producers who were creating a movie about teenagers at a California high school. They tapped Heckerling to direct the film, *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*. Released in the fall of 1982, the picture became the sleeper hit of the year. It also launched Heckerling's career, along with those of its young stars, Sean Penn, Jennifer Jason Leigh, and Nicolas Cage.

Fast Times vaulted Heckerling into an exclusive club: female directors who were sought after by Hollywood studios. Significantly, she became known as a filmmaker who paid special attention to female characters. In *Fast Times*, for example, young women contemplate sex, relationships, and even difficult issues such as abortion. In 1984, Heckerling made *Johnny Dangerously*. Featuring Michael Keaton and Marilu Henner, the picture was a spoof of traditional gangster movies. Unfortunately for Heckerling, it was a critical and box-office flop. She bounced back in 1985 with *National Lampoon's European Vacation*, which featured Chevy Chase and Beverly D'Angelo. Heckerling's next big hit was 1989's *Look Who's Talking*, starring Kirstie Alley and John Travolta as friends, and potential romantic mates, Mollie and James. The story is told from the perspective of Mollie's baby (brilliantly voiced by Bruce Willis), who desperately wants his mother and James to get together. Heckerling has said that the birth of her own daughter, Mollie, in 1985 prompted her to write a screenplay that focused on the thoughts of an infant (Sjursen, 1999).

In the early 1990s, Heckerling hit a rough patch. Seeking to capitalize on the success of the first film, she quickly wrote and directed *Look Who's Talking Too* (1990), but the sequel failed miserably at the box office. Then in 1991, Heckerling and her husband were divorced. That same year, she settled a lawsuit with two women who claimed that Heckerling had really based *Look Who's Talking* on a student film they had shown her in 1986 (Horowitz, 1991).

Undaunted, Heckerling went back to work, crafting a movie script inspired by Jane Austen's novel *Emma*. Her efforts paid off, and *Clueless* hit the big screen in 1995. An endearing exposé of teen angst, the coming-of-age comedy centers around a rich Beverly Hills High School student named Cher Horowitz. Cher, delightfully played by Alicia Silverstone, although eager to correct the faults and weaknesses of others,

doesn't seem to realize that she has many of her own. Adored by both fans and critics, *Clueless* earned Heckerling a National Society of Film Critics Award for best screenplay. While studio executives initially balked at making a film that featured female characters, Heckerling stood her ground, resisting the suggestion that more male characters be added to the film and insisting that the story be told from Cher's point of view (Heckerling and Firstenberg, 1995).

Heckerling has produced two television series: *Fast Times*, a short-lived 1986 series based on *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*; and *Clueless*, a sitcom inspired by the 1995 film that had a three-year run. Her next two films, 1998's *A Night at the Roxbury*, based on a *Saturday Night Live* skit, and *Loser* (2000), which tells the story of two young college students, were coolly received, both by audiences and critics. In 2005, seeking to address a movie studio culture that consistently denies film leads to older women, Heckerling made *I Could Never Be Your Woman*, which featured Michelle Pfeiffer, who, interestingly, is one of the few actresses who can still carry a Hollywood picture despite being in her fifties. Plagued by postproduction problems, the film made little impact, going straight to DVD.

Independence and passion may very well be Heckerling's most enduring qualities. She has said that she's been offered formulaic movies to direct, but would rather write and direct her own projects (Schwartz, 2008). She continues to be a director who resolutely refuses to step behind the camera until the right project comes along.

Selected Filmography

I Could Never Be Your Woman (2007); *Loser* (2000); *Clueless* (1995); *Look Who's Talking Too* (1990); *Look Who's Talking* (1989); *European Vacation* (1985); *Johnny Dangerously* (1984); *Fast Times at Ridgemont High* (1982); *Getting It Over With* (1977)

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—Rachael Hanel

HEPBURN, KATHARINE. Katharine Hepburn was one of America's most successful and influential performers. She presented audiences with strong female characters in over 50 films and across a seven-decade career. Her offscreen persona heightened her legacy as an outspoken and determined woman who challenged—and changed—the nation's attitudes toward sexual difference.

Katharine Houghton Hepburn was born on May 12, 1907, to upper-middle class and politically progressive parents in Hartford, Connecticut. When she was 14, Hepburn's beloved older brother, Tom, hanged himself. Hepburn discovered the body, a traumatic experience that caused her to withdraw from her peers. She attended Bryn Mawr College, graduating in 1928 with a degree in philosophy and history. Hepburn pursued a career in acting after graduating college, and performed in a variety of small roles until her athletic performance in *The Warrior's Husband* on Broadway in 1932 drew attention. A screen test for RKO Studios in Hollywood (which was regularly recruiting Broadway stars as talking movies began to be made) landed her a leading role opposite John Barrymore in *A Bill of Divorcement* (1932), the first of 10 films she would make with director George Cukor. Indeed, much of



Studio portrait of actress Katharine Hepburn in 1957. (Getty Images)

Cukor's reputation as a "woman's director" may be due to his collaborations with Hepburn, most of which demonstrated atypical sensitivity to gender issues.

Hepburn made her second film, *Christopher Strong* (1933), with director Dorothy Arzner, Hollywood's sole female director during its classical period. That same year, Hepburn earned her first Academy Award for playing Eva Lovelace, an ambitious stage actress, in *Morning Glory*. She also starred as Jo in Cukor's 1933 adaptation of *Little Women*, which was a huge hit. Hepburn did not fare as well in pictures such as *Spitfire* (1934) and *A Woman Rebels* (1936). Audiences even steered clear of her respectable efforts in director John Ford's admittedly rather maudlin *Mary of Scotland* (1936), and the underappreciated *Quality Street* (1937). However, during the latter 1930s, Hepburn had some of her best roles, in films that are now considered classics: *Alice Adams* (1935), *Sylvia Scarlett* (1935), *Stage Door* (1937), *Holiday* (1938), and *Bringing Up Baby* (Howard Hawks, 1938). Giving expression to her own feminist views, Hepburn chose to play strong female characters who made—and owned—their choices. She bestowed her characters with an intelligence and articulateness all too rare for

the time. This, coupled with Hepburn's reluctance to give interviews and her penchant for being photographed wearing slacks (a remarkable behavior for a female public figure at the time), created a persona that mass audiences rejected as haughty and unsympathetic.

Hepburn's attitude, both on the screen and off, may have had much to do with her lack of commercial success in the second half of the 1930s. Audiences turned away from her films in such numbers that she was pronounced "box-office poison" in 1938. This decree drove her back to Broadway, where she appeared in *The Philadelphia Story* (1939), a play written specifically for her by playwright Philip Barry. Hepburn received stellar reviews for her performance as Tracy Lord, an arrogant socialite who must learn to temper her expectations of others with a "regard for human frailty." Having bought the rights to the play, Hepburn was able to cast herself in the film version, which she made with Cukor. The story, in which a series of men chastise Tracy for her proud manner, addressed viewer's objections to what they perceived as Hepburn's arrogance, and the film once again made her an audience darling.

Following *The Philadelphia Story* in 1940, she appeared as renowned journalist Tess Harding in George Stevens's *Woman of the Year* (1942). This film also starred Spencer Tracy, with whom she would make nine films (and share a romantic relationship until his death in 1967). Hepburn and Tracy became one of Hollywood's most celebrated couples; their films confronted the changing dynamics between men and women in America during and following World War II. The best-known among them are *Without Love* (1945), *Adam's Rib* (1949) and *Pat and Mike* (1952), the latter two both Cukor films, and *Desk Set* (1957). Their last film together was *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (1967), for which they both received Academy Awards.

Prior to *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, Hepburn made a number of memorable films, such as *The African Queen* (John Huston, 1951). She published her experiences about making the film in *The Making of the African Queen or How I Went to Africa with Bogart, Bacall and Huston and Almost Lost My Mind*. In 1955, David Lean cast her in *Summertime*, the story of a lonely middle-aged woman traveling in Venice. Hepburn played the villainous Mrs. Venable in Joseph L. Mankiewicz's adaptation of Tennessee Williams's *Suddenly Last Summer* (1959) before giving a highly affecting performance as a morphine-addicted mother in *Long Day's Journey into Night* (1962).

Hepburn received another Academy Award the year after Tracy's death for her tragicomic turn as Eleanor of Aquitaine in *The Lion in Winter* (Anthony Harvey, 1968). She returned to the theater in the 1970s, though she also appeared in a handful of quality television movies, notably *Love among the Ruins* (1975), with Laurence Olivier, and *The Corn is Green* (1979), both directed by Cukor. In 1981, Hepburn starred with Henry Fonda in *On Golden Pond* (1981); the two played aging parents coming to grips with their relationship with their adult daughter, played by Fonda's real daughter, Jane Fonda. For her moving performance, Hepburn won her record fourth Best Actress Oscar.

In 1999, the American Film Institute declared Hepburn the Greatest Female Star in the history of American cinema. She died on June 29, 2003, in her home in Old Saybrook, Connecticut.

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—Kyle Stevens

HESTON, CHARLTON. As both actor and political activist, Charlton Heston captivated audiences with his portrayal of strong, masculine leaders in films while publicly promoting conservative religious and social values to the American public. Born into a hardworking Michigan family on October 4, 1923, Heston attended Northwestern University before serving in the army briefly before the end of World War II. He and his wife Lydia worked as actors, earning roles on Broadway and directing at small theaters until Heston's first major role as Cinna in the 1949 television broadcast of *Julius Caesar*. After this initial achievement, his career rose with the advent of television, and Heston won his first star role in the 1950 film *Dark City*. Though he did not earn the Academy Award for Best Actor until 1959, amidst the stunning success of William Wyler's *Ben-Hur*, Heston's iconic representation of Moses in Cecil B. DeMille's *The Ten Commandments* (1956) established his image as a bold, strong-willed leader on the screen. Throughout the 1960s his roles in films such as *El Cid*, *Khartoum*, *The Greatest Story Ever Told*, *The Agony and the Ecstasy*, and *Planet of the Apes* met with critical and box-office success and solidified his reputation as an actor, while numerous forays into the American political scene made him increasingly visible to the American public.

An active member of the Democratic Party, Heston threw his support behind Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, marched on Washington in favor of the Civil Rights bill, and supported Great Society programs. He also began serving on the board of the Screen Actors Guild (SAG), and promoted "enlightened trade unionism" throughout his six years as president of the organization. As such, Heston fought for actors' rights to withdraw personal dues from the guild and thus to maintain an independent working status if they disagreed with the union's political philosophy and policies. As liberalism came to dominate the policies of both the U.S. government and SAG, Heston's formerly Democratic position turned increasingly toward the right, and he aligned with neoconservatives in support of Ronald Reagan's election, officially registering with the Republican Party in 1987.

Though Heston's career as actor and political spokesperson may seem like two distinct phases, with the success of his 1950s–60s acting career as the first and his 1970s–2000s political activism as the second, his actions in regard to both endeavors remained intertwined. Switching from the Democratic to Republican parties, Heston's shift in allegiance occurred as Americans formerly united over Cold War–era concerns became increasingly divided over national issues. As Heston faced radical liberalism from the SAG, U.S. politicians, and independent social groups in the 1970s, '80s, and '90s, he turned to leaders whom he had vivified onstage as true exemplars of American heroism and Christian morality. Speaking to voters in favor of the conservative



Pictured here in 1981, Charlton Heston was known both as an Academy Award-winning actor and a spokesperson for conservative causes, most notably as president of the National Rifle Association (1998–2003). (National Archives)

right-to-work campaign of 1986, the well-known public figure informed his audience that the very men he had portrayed on stage and screen, such as Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln, had held upright American freedoms.

In the 1990s, Heston won the offices of vice president and president of the National Rifle Association (NRA). Arguing that the Second Amendment is essential to upholding American liberty, Heston made reference to one of his most iconic roles in a speech he gave to the National Press Club in 1997. Utilizing his popular public image as the character Moses, the experienced actor linked the Ten Commandments to the Bill of Rights in an effort to emphasize the importance of basic American freedoms, such as the right to own and use a firearm. Both an inspirational and a polarizing figure at this point in his life, Heston's personal, political, and artistic choices during the last half-century have revealed just how complex America's evolutionary process has been.

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—Sarah Bishoff

HILL, GEORGE ROY. Although George Roy Hill made only 14 feature films, he showed a remarkable talent for deftly telling stories that explore the complexity of marginalized characters that exist on the outskirts of mainstream society and the close relationships they form. An intensely private man, Hill's life as a member of the cinematic community seemed to reflect the lives of many of his characters, as the Oscar-winning director remained on the edge of Hollywood culture throughout his career.

George Roy Hill was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on December 21, 1921, to George Roy and Helen Frances Owens Hill. His affluent Roman Catholic family was involved in newspaper publishing and owned the Minneapolis Tribune. He attended The Blake School, one of Minnesota's most prestigious private schools. Hill developed a love of flying when he was young and served as a cargo pilot in the U.S. Marine Corps during World War II. After the war, he studied at Trinity College in Ireland.

Hill was 40 when he directed his first film, coming to Hollywood by way of military service, flying with the Marine Corps in both World War II and the Korean War; from academia, earning a BA in music from Yale and a B. Litt from Trinity University in Dublin; from television, winning Emmy nominations for writing and directing; and from directing on Broadway. Adapted for the screen, one of the plays that Hill directed onstage, *Period of Adjustment* by Tennessee Williams, was the first feature film that he directed. His second film, *Toys in the Attic* (1963), was also based on a stage play.

Hill's third film, *The World of Henry Orient* (1964), concentrates on the lives of two 14-year-old girls who seek adventures in New York City. Even in this early film, Hill's attention is focused on dispossessed individuals—the girls, who are on the verge of entering the messy relational world of adulthood after growing up in dysfunctional families. Together, they dedicate themselves to the “world of Henry Orient,” a modern concert pianist with whom one has fallen in love. Although Orient turns out to be a fraud as an artist, his world still provides the girls with the love, community, and acceptance for which they hunger. Hill would revisit these themes in *A Little Romance* (1979), in which two 13-year-olds, an American girl and a Parisian boy (a devotee of American films, chiefly Hill's), who meet and ultimately pledge their eternal love for each other with a sunset kiss under the Bridge of Sighs in Venice. As with the girls in *Henry Orient*, the characters in *A Little Romance* enlist the help of an aging con artist who can provide the support that their families, apparently, cannot.

Clearly the most successful of Hill's films, both critically and commercially, were *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969) and *The Sting* (1973). (Hill was nominated as Best Director for both pictures, taking home the Oscar for *The Sting*.) Companion pieces starring Paul Newman and Robert Redford, both films focus on the friendship between men who exist outside the borders of polite, legal society. While seemingly perfect examples of traditional genre films, *Butch Cassidy* and *The Sting* actually act to subvert the normative structures of genre itself. The Newman and Redford characters in each film portray “old-world” men committed to a dying way of life that favors partnership over the individual accumulation of wealth. Although Hill allows audiences to identify strongly with the roguish male protagonists in each of these pictures, he also leaves viewers uneasy by weaving a dark existentialist thread through the narrative fabrics of the films. Ostensibly celebrations of American culture, in the end, the

films prove to be unsettling critiques of that culture. Redford and Newman would each work with Hill again, although not together. Redford starred in *The Great Waldo Pepper* (1975), a film about a barnstorming flying ace that, given Hill's experience as a Marine pilot and his joy of flying his open-cockpit Waco, was particularly close to the director's heart. Two years later, Newman would take the lead in *Slap Shot* (1977), which explored the trials and tribulations of a losing hockey team. Although in these films Hill sought to explore the same themes he had addressed in *Butch Cassidy* and *The Sting*, *The Great Waldo Pepper* and *Slap Shot* did not enjoy the same success as Hill's earlier, iconic pictures.

Though a number of his films did extremely well at the box office, Hill's concern as a director was never simply to make money. One of a wave of 1960s and 1970s proto-independent American filmmakers—along with others such as Robert Altman, Martin Scorsese, Arthur Penn, and Mike Nichols—Hill strove to make pictures that would appeal to cinematically intelligent audiences. Toward this end, he adapted for the screen two modernist novels that focused on the existential struggles of the individual in history: *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1972), based on Kurt Vonnegut Jr.'s work of the same name, and *The World According to Garp* (1982), based on John Irving's work of the same name. Although these quirky little pictures did not prove popular with audiences, they remained true to Hill's commitment to create films that sought to explore the deepest levels of the human experience.

George Roy Hill died in 2002 from complications related to Parkinson's disease.

Selected Filmography

Funny Farm (1988); *The Little Drummer Girl* (1984); *The World According to Garp* (1982); *A Little Romance* (1979); *Slap Shot* (1977); *The Great Waldo Pepper* (1975); *The Sting* (1973); *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1972); *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969); *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (1967); *Hawaii* (1966); *The World of Henry Orient* (1964); *Toys in the Attic* (1963); *Period of Adjustment* (1962)

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—Sarah N. Petrovic

HITCHCOCK, ALFRED. Sir Alfred Hitchcock (1899–1980), the acknowledged master of the spy-thriller genre during his lifetime, is still regarded as one of the supreme auteurs of the twentieth century. Few directors are as often cited or imitated by filmmakers eager to claim a measure of creative cachet for their suspense-based plots; but as yet, no one can reasonably claim to have surpassed Hitchcock in his ability to evoke a world of fear, intrigue, and hidden guilt.

Hitchcock's middle-class upbringing and Catholic education afford few clues to an understanding of his future career, which began formally at the age of 21 when he was hired by the British branch of Paramount's Famous Player-Lasky studio to draw dialogue title cards. Hitchcock's literary as well as artistic talents were soon recognized, and he quickly made the transition from art director and scriptwriter to director, thanks to the support of Michael Balcon, for whose Gainsborough Pictures Hitchcock directed several silent features. The most important of these early films was unquestionably *The Lodger* (1926), a romantic thriller based loosely on the real-life crimes of Jack the Ripper. Hitchcock's mysterious "lodger" is suspected of being a serial murderer of women, but by film's end his innocence is established and



Alfred Hitchcock, who began directing motion pictures in his native Great Britain, immigrated to the United States, where he directed and produced his most well-known films. (AP/Wide World Photos)

the movie's heroine is his. This is the first instance of Hitchcock's use of the "wrong man" motif, a theme that will appear and reappear in nearly all of his major works. Hitchcock's preference for evocative imagery, oblique angles, and dramatic lighting—reminiscent of the German expressionist movement, which influenced him profoundly during his year directing films in Germany—is equally evident in this film.

Hitchcock made the transition to synchronized sound in 1929 with the film *Blackmail*, where a plot that turns on sexual violence, unsolved murder, and secret guilt becomes the dramatic focus of this work. Hitchcock released two versions of this film—one silent, the other with sound—but it is only in the latter that he is able to fuse an obsessive visual motif with auditory clues that rivet the audience's attention on an instrument of death. Hitchcock's work in his native England came to an end in 1939 when he accepted an invitation from legendary producer David O. Selznick to join him in Hollywood, but during the decade from 1929 to 1939, he directed some of the more memorable films of his career. Three films that stand out from this period are *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1934), *The 39 Steps* (1935), and *The Lady Vanishes* (1938), and all three fall squarely within the spy-thriller category. In swift pacing and

deft characterization, each of these films demonstrates Hitchcock's ability to construct a suspenseful (if not always plausible) narrative, complete with touches of humor and romance. However, to draw his audience into the controlled mayhem of a spy story, Hitchcock also employs an additional plot device that he described as the "MacGuffin," meaning any dramatic conflict that sets the story in motion or provides a pretext for action. And in each of these films, Hitchcock's favorite MacGuffin is a conspiracy, inimical to England (or to all freedom-loving people, as the case may be), hatched by agents of a "foreign" power, against which the seemingly inadequate resources of his unpolitical protagonists are pitted. The exposure and defeat of this conspiratorial group then becomes the mainspring of the film's plot. Hitchcock's fondness for this peculiar storyline is evident throughout his career, and it remains the one structural motif that viewers of his major films can easily trace.

Hitchcock's debut film in the United States was *Rebecca* (1940), based on Daphne du Maurier's wildly popular novel of that title. Selznick offered Hitchcock his choice of A-list actors (in this case, Laurence Olivier and Judith Anderson) and outstanding production facilities, but he also insisted on an intrusive regime of constant supervision of scripts, and shooting schedules, and even camera set-ups, and before long Hitchcock realized it would be impossible for the two of them to work together. Thus, *Rebecca's* success notwithstanding—it won an Academy Award for Best Picture—Selznick chose to rent out Hitchcock to other studios like Universal, United Artists, RKO, and Twentieth Century-Fox, where he made the next six of the next eight films, most of which either reflect a wartime atmosphere or carry an explicit anti-Nazi message: *Foreign Correspondent* (1940), *Saboteur* (1942), *Lifeboat* (1944), and *Notorious* (1946). Of these, *Notorious* has proven to be the most enduringly popular, in part because of its stellar performances, but also because of Hitchcock's masterful use of the camera both to capture emotional nuance and build suspense. In addition to these American productions, Hitchcock took time out to make two short films for the British Ministry of Information, *Bon Voyage* (1944) and *Aventure malgache* (1944), the latter in support of the French Resistance.

Not all of Hitchcock's work during this period, of course, was political in nature. *Suspicion* (1941) marked the beginning of a more than decade-long professional relationship with Cary Grant (they made four films together), but it is also remembered for its tentative multiple endings, and RKO's insistence that Grant could not, under any circumstances, be cast as a wife-murderer (thereby necessitating a last-minute plot change). Nor was this the last time that studio heads would intervene to alter a Hitchcock script, and his desire to achieve complete directorial autonomy began to grow from this period on. However, Hitchcock's experience directing *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943) for Universal proved a happier experience, and once again he was able to take the story of a serial murderer of women (shades of *The Lodger*) and humanize his killer by surrounding him with a loving and ultimately uncomprehending family. Returning to Selznick in 1945, Hitchcock also directed *Spellbound*, one of the earliest films to make explicit use of Freudian psychotherapy. Hitchcock had planned to incorporate a series of elaborately designed dream sequences—drawn by Salvador Dali—only to have this segment of the film sharply reduced by Selznick, who had convinced himself

that Hitchcock's work was too cerebral for popular audiences. Hitchcock's last attempt to work with Selznick was in 1947, when he directed *The Paradine Case*, a poorly scripted courtroom drama that proved to be one of Hitchcock's greatest box-office flops.

Now free from any further contractual obligations to Selznick International, Hitchcock attempted to form his own production company, Transatlantic Pictures, which proved to be a short-lived venture. However, he did manage to make one daringly experimental film during this period entitled *Rope* (1948), an adaptation of a stage play based on the infamous Leopold and Loeb murders. *Rope* is best remembered for its innovative use of extended takes (creating the illusion of one continuous shot throughout) and its emotionally heightened use of color, though film historians have also noted an interest in implied homoerotic relationships between the two principal male characters that will resurface in some of Hitchcock's later films as well. It also marks the first of four films that Hitchcock would make with Jimmy Stewart in a lead role. As for Hitchcock's interest in the psychopathic mind—a critical dimension of *Rope*—that would increase over the years until it became the obsessive focus of his later films.

The films made during 1951 to 1964 are often referred to by Hitchcock's biographers as the work of his "golden years," and in swift succession he completed films that won him both critical acclaim and immense box-office success. The first of these, *Strangers on a Train* (1951) continues a theme that runs like a thread through many of Hitchcock's films, namely, the idea of a shared guilt (or in Joseph Conrad's phrase a secret sharer) that binds together the innocent and the truly guilty. In this case, the seemingly fortuitous, yet fateful, connection that is established between a tennis pro, Guy Haines (Farley Granger), and a talkative stranger he meets on a train, Bruno Anthony (Robert Walker), leads to Bruno's murder of guy's estranged wife, and the expectation that Guy will reciprocate by killing Bruno's hated father. Guy's refusal to "exchange murders" leads to a typical Hitchcockian cat-and-mouse chase in which Guy must prove his innocence while exposing Bruno as the real killer, and once again we are confronted with the moral dilemma of the "wrong man." Hitchcock's obvious fondness for this narrative construct suggests a deep authorial suspicion that clear moral distinctions are often a camouflage for partly buried but undeniably powerful unconscious desires.

Dial M for Murder (1954) explores similar terrain, albeit in a much more conventional setting, by making an unhappy wife (famously played by Grace Kelly, in the first of three Hitchcock films she would star in) as the target of a murder-for-hire plot from which she must extricate herself, only to find that she has become the prime suspect in the killing of her would-be assassin. Husbands in Hitchcock's films tend, on the whole, to be treacherous, and even homicidal, and Ray Milland's Tony Wendice is no exception, and his exposure and apprehension at the conclusion of the film provides the kind of moral-emotional closure that popular audiences craved throughout the 1950s.

Hitchcock's next major work, *Rear Window* (1954), provides many of the melodramatic effects and emotional satisfactions of his earlier films, and certainly benefits from a stellar cast; nevertheless, it presents us with an unsettling portrait of the artist as a largely neurotic voyeur, and intimates a general view of marriage that is more subversive than one would expect. Its protagonist, L. B. Jeffries, played with consummate

irony by Jimmy Stewart, is an action photographer who has been immobilized by an injury and whose sole form of entertainment is the opportunity to spy on his neighbors. The murder mystery that subsequently plays out before his prying eyes is complicated by the tentative love affair that Jeffries maintains with his glamorous and increasingly demanding girlfriend, Lisa Fremont (once again, Grace Kelly). Together, they track down a wife killer (yet another!) whose attempt to kill Jeffries (by throwing him out of his “rear window”) ends unsuccessfully. But in the process of unfolding his convoluted plot, and allowing the viewer to glimpse the troubled lives of Jeffries’s stereotypically maladjusted neighbors, Hitchcock exploits our willingness to invade another’s privacy. And out of this guilty pleasure arises yet another ironic insight: the realization that practically all forms of intimate knowledge, even in the most innocent-seeming of circumstances, are fraught with the possibility of danger and death.

By this time Hitchcock was safely ensconced at Paramount Studios, and there he produced a series of entertaining films of somewhat lesser artistry, including *To Catch a Thief* (1955), *The Trouble with Harry* (1955), and a remake of an earlier spy thriller, *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956). Of this group, *To Catch a Thief* remains a perennial favorite, chiefly owing to the comic/romantic pairing of Cary Grant and Grace Kelly, whose clever verbal foreplay turns out to be far more interesting than the unlikely tale of deception and detection that surrounds them. The closing years of this decade, however, saw the production of two of Hitchcock’s undisputed masterpieces—*Vertigo* (1958) and *North by Northwest* (1959)—and in both, Hitchcock is in full command of his powers of visualization and his talent for intricate plot construction. Based on a French mystery novel (*D’entre les morts* by Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac), *Vertigo* invites the viewer to enter a world of terrifying dreams and erotic obsessions, bound up in a story of deception and murder. Once again, a scheming husband executes an elaborate plan to do away with his wife, enlisting the unknowing support of a former detective and college acquaintance (John “Scottie” Ferguson, played by Jimmy Stewart) whose paralyzing acrophobia has led to his premature retirement from the police force. Scottie’s discovery of the murder plot, however, is virtually displaced by a romantic subplot that raises disturbing questions about the nature of identity and the reality of love.

North by Northwest, by contrast, marks Hitchcock’s return to a far more conventional narrative tradition of espionage and romantic entanglements. Centering on the misadventures of Roger O. Thornhill, ad agency executive and ladies’ man (played by Cary Grant in his last Hitchcock film), *North by Northwest* carries us along at breakneck speed, as its protagonist is compelled not only to prove his innocence of a murder he did not commit (echoes of the “wrong man” theme), but also rescue a beautiful counterspy with whom he has fallen in love. Hitchcock’s wildly implausible plotline is more than redeemed, however, by witty dialogue and extraordinary camera work that transforms a clichéd cliffhanger into a seriocomic melodrama of self-discovery. Hitchcock’s filming of a chase scene across an empty field, in which his hero is pursued by a deadly crop-duster (whose bullets, curiously, never find their mark) has become one of the truly iconic images of American filmmaking, as well as a textbook illustration of Hitchcock’s talent for narrative/visual construction.

The creative surge of this extraordinary decade reaches its point of climax with the filming of two memorable thrillers, *Psycho* (1960) and *The Birds* (1963), and in both of these films Hitchcock attempts to shock his audience in a more direct and violent manner than in any of his earlier movies. Of the two, *Psycho* is the more brutal and explicitly terrifying work, much closer in subject matter and tone to contemporary “slasher” films, in which innocent victims of a deranged killer are literally cut to shreds. Both films, however, abound in images of entrapment and paranoia, and both reflect a sudden darkening of Hitchcock’s vision of life. *The Birds* especially conjures up an apocalyptic view of nature, as flocks of otherwise harmless birds suddenly descend on Bodega Bay, attacking every human who comes across their path. In each of these works, death comes suddenly and with a ferocity that defies rational explanation; never have Hitchcock’s characters appeared quite so fragile or defenseless as in these experiments in terror, and critics of his work have observed a growing nihilism in these late films.

Hitchcock’s next three films—*Marnie* (1964), *Torn Curtain* (1966), and *Topaz* (1969)—all reveal a perceptible decline of creative energy and directorial control, and not surprisingly all three did poorly at the box office. Changes in popular taste made Hitchcock’s attempts to revisit the world of Cold War spies seem dated, and problems of casting compounded Hitchcock’s inability to find scriptwriters and cinematographers whose gifts matched his storytelling abilities. His last two films, *Frenzy* (1972) and *Family Plot* (1976), however, constitute an interesting coda to his remarkable career, as Hitchcock recovers through both a measure of audience appeal and critical esteem that he had lost in his later years. For many viewers, *Frenzy* seemed a companion piece to *Psycho*, projecting us into the mind of a psychopathic murderer of women whose seeming innocuousness belied his terrifying erotomania. Unlike the protagonist of *Psycho*, however, *Frenzy*’s homicidal greengrocer has no revealing backstory that helps us to understand his violent obsessions, and inevitably Hitchcock’s drama devolves into a case of untimely (but ultimately successful) police work, as the “wrong man, unjustly sentenced for another man’s crimes, leads authorities to the actual murderer.

Family Plot, by contrast, exhibits no grisly crimes, but rather adopts an almost humorous tone, reminiscent of some of Hitchcock’s earlier films (for example, *Rear Window*) in which a macabre sense of social satire and comedy merges with a suspense plot and an atmosphere of imminent danger. That Hitchcock returned to the study of moral perversity—in this case, a “family” of kidnappers whose greed and sense of empowerment through crime drives the plot—in his last work is in many ways a fitting finale for an artist whose work turns constantly on the struggle between innocence and evil. No other Anglo-American director has yet managed to turn the resources of the suspense genre to the purposes of psychological and moral analysis more compellingly than Alfred Hitchcock, and his six decades of innovative filmmaking, in retrospect, appear to be an amazing record of sustained creativity.

Selected Filmography

Family Plot (1976); *Frenzy* (1972); *Topaz* (1969); *Torn Curtain* (1966); *Marnie* (1964); *The Birds* (1963); *Psycho* (1960); *North by Northwest* (1959); *Vertigo* (1958); *The Wrong Man*

(1956); *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956); *The Trouble with Harry* (1955); *To Catch a Thief* (1955); *Rear Window* (1954); *Dial M for Murder* (1954); *I Confess* (1953); *Strangers on a Train* (1951); *Rope* (1948); *The Paradine Case* (1947); *Notorious* (1946); *Spellbound* (1945); *Lifeboat* (1944); *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943); *Saboteur* (1942); *Suspicion* (1941); *Mr. & Mrs. Smith* (1941); *Foreign Correspondent* (1940); *Rebecca* (1940); *Jamaica Inn* (1939); *The Lady Vanishes* (1938); *Sabotage* (1936); *Secret Agent* (1936); *The 39 Steps* (1935); *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1934); *Number 17* (1932); *The Skin Game* (1931); *Murder!* (1930); *Blackmail* (1928); *The Manxman* (1928); *Champagne* (1928); *Easy Virtue* (1928); *The Farmer's Wife* (1928); *When Boys Leave Home* (1927)

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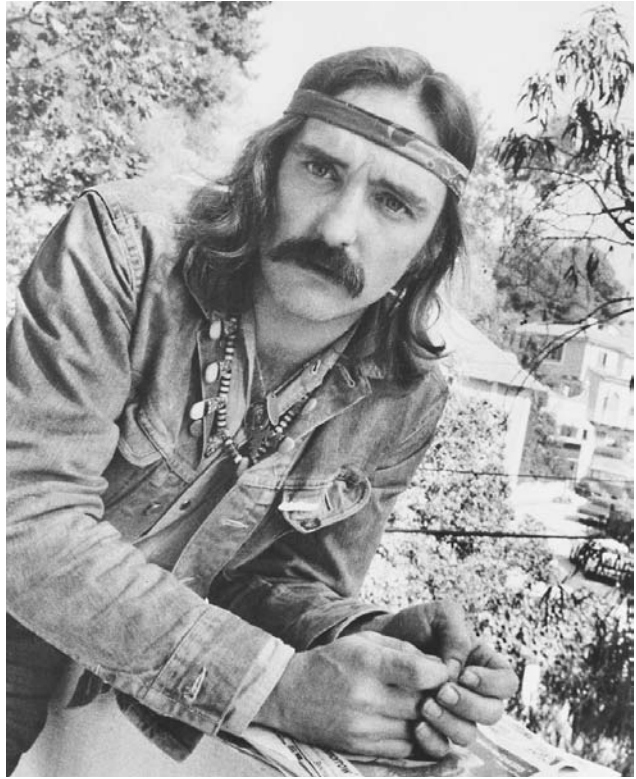
—Robert Platzner

HOPPER, DENNIS. Dennis Hopper, in his more than 50 years as an actor and director, has known extraordinary success and astonishing failure. Indeed, his career appeared dead a number of times, but defying convention—as many of his on-screen characters do—and showing uncanny survival abilities, he has always orchestrated comebacks, becoming an iconic countercultural figure and one of the few Hollywood legends in the process.

Hopper was born on May 17, 1936, in Dodge City, Kansas. In his early teens, he moved with his parents to San Diego, California, and showed promise as an actor, winning a scholarship to study at San Diego's Old Globe Theatre, where he performed Shakespearean roles. After high school, Hopper went to Los Angeles and got parts on episodes of various television series, most notably as an epileptic on *Medic*. His performance in that role impressed Hollywood studio heads. Harry Cohn of Columbia Pictures agreed to meet him but made the mistake of belittling Hopper's Shakespearean background. Hopper told him off, in no uncertain terms, and was banned from Columbia Pictures' studios.

Hopper signed on with Warner Bros. and landed small roles in *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955) and *Giant*, two pictures featuring James Dean. Dean, who introduced Hopper to Stanislavsky's style of "Method acting," would die tragically in a car accident in September 1955, just as shooting on *Giant* was coming to a close. Dean's death devastated Hopper, and he decided to leave Los Angeles and go to New York to study Method acting at the Lee Strasberg Institute, as Dean had done. When Hopper returned to Hollywood, his devotion to the Method put him at odds with the Hollywood establishment. Having developed a reputation for being difficult, Hopper had trouble landing big roles; he continued to work, however, garnering supporting roles in major films such as *Cool Hand Luke* (1967), as well as small parts in episodic television.

In 1968, Hopper, who had also been working as a photographer, directed and co-starred, with Peter Fonda, in *Easy Rider*, a landmark and extremely controversial film about two pot-smoking bikers who are attempting to escape straight America. Tapping into the 1960s counterculture, the picture, which cost less than \$400,000 to make, earned \$40 million after it was released in 1969, and was a driving force in the burgeoning movement of independent filmmaking. Hopper, who earned his first Oscar nomination as one of the film's co-writers (Peter Fonda and Terry Southern were the others), was declared a genius; within two years, however, it seemed that he had sabotaged his own career. Attempting to undermine further the established process of Hollywood filmmaking, Hopper made *The Last Movie*, a film that



Director and actor Dennis Hopper in 1971. (AP/Wide World Photos)

sought to expose the illusionary character of the American movie industry. After taking home top honors at the Venice Film Festival, the picture was a box-office disaster and Hopper once again found himself struggling to get work.

Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, Hopper did find parts—most notably in Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* (1979)—but these were usually small roles in marginal films. His problems were exacerbated by his extensive drug use, which led to hallucinations and his eventual commitment to a psychiatric ward in 1984. After being released, Hopper bounced back. In 1986, he played Shooter, an alcoholic ex-basketball star, in *Hoosiers*—which earned him an Oscar nomination for best supporting actor—and Frank Booth, a drug-crazed dealer in *Blue Velvet*. Building on these performances, Hopper proved his versatility, performing in pictures such as *The Indian Runner* (1991) and *Super Mario Brothers* (1993). He has since shown that he can tackle almost any role, playing villainous parts in *Speed* (1994) and *Waterworld* (1995), romantic parts in *Carried Away* (1996) and *All the Way* (2003), and comedic parts in *EdTV* (1999) and *Knockaround Guys* (2002). Hopper also returned to the director's chair for *Colors* (1988), *The Hot Spot* (1990), *Chasers* (1994), and *Homeless* (2000); and to television for the miniseries *Paris Trout* in 1991, for which he won an Emmy,

and for episodes of *Flatland* and *24* in 2002, *E-Ring* in 2006, and *Crash* in 2008 and 2009. Dennis Hopper died on May 29, 2010, at the age of 74, after a 10-year battle with prostate cancer.

Selected Filmography

Homeless (2000); *Bad City Blues* (1999); *The Venice Project* (1999); *Jesus's Son* (1999); *Waterworld* (1995); *Straight Shooter* (1999); *EdTV* (1999); *Chasers* (1994); *True Romance* (1993); *Red Rock West* (1993); *Super Mario Bros.* (1993); *The Indian Runner* (1991); *Paris Trout* (1991); *The Hot Spot* (1990); *Catchfire* (1990); *Colors* (1988); *The Pick-up Artist* (1987); *Straight to Hell* (1987); *Hoosiers* (1986); *Blue Velvet* (1986); *River's Edge* (1986); *The Osterman Weekend* (1983); *Rumble Fish* (1983); *Out of the Blue* (1980); *Apocalypse Now* (1979); *The Last Movie* (1971); *True Grit* (1969); *Easy Rider* (1969); *Head* (1968); *Panic in the City* (1968); *Hang 'Em High* (1968); *The Glory Stompers* (1968); *Cool Hand Luke* (1967); *The Trip* (1967); *From Hell to Texas* (1958); *Gunfight at the O.K. Corral* (1957); *Giant* (1956); *I Died a Thousand Times* (1955); *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955)

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—Albert Rolls

HUSTON, JOHN. One of the twentieth century's most successful filmmakers, John Huston directed a number of American classics and also excelled as a screenwriter and actor. During a career that spanned a half-century, he was a larger-than-life presence in Hollywood who worked with the greatest film stars of his generation. He was nominated for 10 Academy Awards.

John Marcellus Huston was born in Nevada, Missouri, on August 5, 1906, the son of stage and screen actor Walter Huston and newspaperwoman Rhea Gore. Huston's childhood was unconventional, to say the least. After his parents divorced, he traveled the country with his father on the vaudeville circuit and spent considerable time at major news and sporting events that his mother covered. Though sickly as a child, he eventually conquered his physical frailties and became a capable amateur boxer. Dropping out of school at 14, he worked a variety of jobs, including breaking horses and performing street theater, before winning his first Broadway role in the 1925 production *Ruini*. Never one to stay in one place for long, Huston traveled to Mexico, London, and Paris as he tried to chart a course for his life; he eventually ended up back in the United States penniless. After lackluster attempts at newspaper and magazine reporting,

he finally found his calling as a screenwriter and part-time actor. Catching the eye of Warner Bros. executives, Huston got his big break in 1941 when the studio signed him to direct the screen adaptation of Dashiell Hammett's popular mystery *The Maltese Falcon*. One of the most popular films of all time, *The Maltese Falcon* established Huston as a director and Humphrey Bogart as a Hollywood star. The film also was the first of a string of films directed by Huston and featuring Bogart, including *Across the Pacific* (1942), *Key Largo* (1948), and *Treasure of the Sierra Madre* (1948). *Treasure of the Sierra Madre* was an especially important film for the Huston family, as John won the Academy Award for Best Director while his father Walter won the Oscar for Best Supporting Actor. During World War II, Huston served as an officer in the signal corps, where he produced documentaries for the U.S. government. These included the controversial film *Let There Be Light*, which dealt with the mental and physical problems experienced by returning World War II veterans.

For Huston, more success followed during the 1950s with a wide range of films including his landmark effort *The African Queen* (1951), starring Bogart and Katharine Hepburn; *The Red Badge of Courage* (1951), starring Audie Murphy; the Toulouse-Latrec biographical film *Moulin Rouge* (1952); and the epic *Moby Dick* (1956), starring Gregory Peck. In 1961, Huston directed Clark Gable's last film, *The Misfits*, which also featured Marilyn Monroe. During the same period, the director began acting in films for the first time in years, usually playing small character roles. He received an Oscar nomination for his performance as a supporting actor in the 1963 feature *The Cardinal*. Although Huston peaked as a director during the 1950s, he continued working on well-received films into the 1980s. His last major success as a director came in 1985 with *Prizzi's Honor*, which was nominated for the Best Picture Oscar and in which Huston directed his daughter Angelica, who won the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress.

Perhaps a product of his unconventional childhood, Huston was known as one of Hollywood's great eccentrics and a man who did his best, for better or worse, to live life to the fullest. In addition to his film pursuits, he was an accomplished painter and sculptor and an avid outdoorsman who counted Orson Welles and Ernest Hemingway as two of his closest friends. He was also known as a hard and sometimes ill-tempered drinker and an aggressive gambler. Huston was married five times and had five children. During the latter stages of his life, he was plagued by a number of illnesses but he continued to pursue various projects. He literally worked up until his last breath, dying of emphysema on August 28, 1987, in Middleton, Rhode Island, on location for a film in which he had a small role.

Selected Filmography

The Dead (1987); *Prizzi's Honor* (1985); *Under the Volcano* (1984); *Annie* (1982); *Victory* (1981); *Phobia* (1980); *Wise Blood* (1979); *Independence* (1976); *The Man Who Would Be King* (1975); *The MacKintosh Man* (1973); *The Life and Times of Judge Roy Bean* (1972); *Fat City* (1972); *The Kremlin Letter* (1970); *A Walk with Love and Death* (1969); *Sinful Davey* (1969); *Reflections in a Golden Eye* (1967); *Casino Royale* (1966); *The Bible: In the Beginning* ...

(1966); *The Night of the Iguana* (1964); *The List of Adrian Messenger* (1963); *Freud* (1962); *The Misfits* (1961); *The Unforgiven* (1960); *The Roots of Heaven* (1958); *The Barbarian and the Geisha* (1958); *Heaven Knows, Mr. Allison* (1957); *Moby Dick* (1956); *Beat the Devil* (1953); *Moulin Rouge* (1952); *The African Queen* (1951); *The Red Badge of Courage* (1951); *The Asphalt Jungle* (1950); *We Were Strangers* (1949); *Key Largo* (1948); *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* (1948); *Let There Be Light* (1946); *San Pietro* (1945); *Report from the Aleutians* (1943); *Across the Pacific* (1942); *Winning Your Wings* (1942); *In This Our Life* (1942); *The Maltese Falcon* (1941)

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—Ben Wynne

KASDAN, LAWRENCE. Born in Miami Beach, Florida, on January 14, 1949, Lawrence Kasdan began his adult life receiving his MA in education from the University of Michigan. Beginning as an award-winning advertising copywriter, Kasdan eventually made his way to Hollywood to pursue a career as a screenwriter. Early on, he sold two screenplays that would go on to become successful films: *Continental Divide* (1981) and *The Bodyguard* (1992). Having caught the attention of Steven Spielberg with *Continental Divide*, he soon met with the famed director and was introduced to George Lucas. Kasdan, then, would be a key figure in the creation of three of the biggest Hollywood blockbusters of the 1980s: *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* (1980); *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981); and *Star Wars: Return of the Jedi* (1983). During this period of collaboration, he would also direct the 1980s hit *Body Heat* (1981), the steamy romance starring William Hurt and Kathleen Turner, before co-writing and directing his biggest hit, the baby-boomer nostalgia flick *The Big Chill* in 1983.

Kasdan's place in Hollywood history, it seems, would have been assured by way of his work with George Lucas alone. As co-writer of the last two films of the original *Star Wars* trilogy—*The Empire Strikes Back* is perhaps the most beloved of the *Star Wars* films—Kasdan will forever be a pop culture icon. His contribution to another pop culture phenomenon, the *Indiana Jones* franchise, only adds to his luster. More than simply a screenwriter on the first *Indiana Jones* film—Kasdan began the process by sitting in a room with Lucas and Spielberg, tape-recorder preserving their conversations—Kasdan was instrumental in sculpting the character and personality of one of Hollywood's most enduring heroes. In fact, characterization has always been one of his greatest skills.

Kasdan broke new ground with *Body Heat* (1981), a controversial noir thriller that titillated audiences. The picture became one of the most popular films of the 1980s, launching its stars, Turner and Hurt, into superstardom. Hurt would once again connect with Kasdan as part of the director's ensemble cast for *The Big Chill*. In addition to Hurt, *The Big Chill* featured Kevin Kline, Tom Berenger, Jeff Goldblum, Glenn Close, Meg Tilly, JoBeth Williams, and Mary Kay Place as former college classmates who gather for the funeral of one of their dear friends. A critical and commercial success, the film became a cultural icon of the 1980s, linking the decade with the 1960s.

Though the two periods could not be more different politically, the soundtrack of the film introduced teenagers of the Reagan era to the music of the 1960s, having a lasting impact on the latter decade. The film itself also showed that the baby-boomer generation, teenagers in the '60s, could still be considered “cool” and “hip” despite having become part of the thirty-something establishment.

For the next decade, Kasdan's record in the industry would be decidedly uneven—just as many of the films on which he worked missed the mark as became hits. Still, he was attached as either a writer or director—or both—to a number of popular films during this period: *Silverado* (1985); *The Accidental Tourist* (1988); *Grand Canyon* (1991); *The Body Guard* (1992); and *Wyatt Earp* (1994). In 1997, Kasdan would finally appear in front of the camera, playing Dr. Green in the Oscar-award-winning picture *As Good As It Gets*.

Though some have suggested that Kasdan's star has dimmed since his halcyon days of the 1980s, he is still considered a writer/director of distinction. Aside from playing a key role in creating and deepening some of the most beloved characters in film history, he contributed to defining popular culture in the late twentieth century.

Selected Filmography

Dreamcatcher (2003); *Mumford* (1999); *Wyatt Earp* (1994); *The Bodyguard* (1992); *Grand Canyon* (1991); *The Accidental Tourist* (1988); *Silverado* (1985); *The Big Chill* (1983); *Star Wars: Episode VI—Return of the Jedi* (1983); *Continental Divide* (1981); *Body Heat* (1981); *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981); *Star Wars: Episode V—The Empire Strikes Back* (1980)

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Star Wars: Empire of Dreams. Documentary Twentieth Century-Fox DVD, 2004.

—Richard A. Hall

KAZAN, ELIA. Elia Kazan gained a reputation for being an actor's director over the course of a stunningly successful career, both on Broadway and in Hollywood. His work won him three Tony awards and two Oscars—and his skill benefited actors (indeed, those who worked with him in films alone garnered 21 Best Actor nominations and 9 Oscars for Best Actor). But in spite of his justifiable renown for being the guiding hand behind some of the most powerful dramas of stage and screen of the 1940s and 1950s, he never escaped the stigma that followed him after he agreed to testify in 1952 to the House Committee on Un-American Affairs (HUAC) and “named names” of friends and colleagues whom he claimed were communist sympathizers.

Born in Constantinople, Turkey in 1909 to Greek parents, Kazan moved with his family to the United States when he was four, and grew up in the suburbs outside New York City. His personal story is an example of American immigrant drive, determination, and success: son of a rug merchant, he went to public school, then to college, receiving his BA at Williams College, where he became interested in drama, and then moved on to Yale Drama School. He never fully lost his sense of being an outsider at Yale. And while what he learned there deepened his understanding of how a director, as Kazan put it in his memoir, performs an “overall task”, he found the model of theater the school taught to be polite and sterile, and he balked at it.

He landed his first professional position not as a director but as an actor in the company of the far from sterile or polite Group Theater in 1933. Recently founded by Harold Clurman, Cheryl Crawford, and Lee Strasberg, the Group was a leftist modern theater collective that emphasized ensemble acting and a cooperative approach to developing theater works. They integrated in their practices acting techniques derived from the theories of Russian theater master Constantine Stanislavsky, techniques Strasberg dubbed “the Method,” a way in which actors created authentic performances by remembering personal moments of intense feeling. Even though it was as an actor that Kazan earned a major critical success, his experience performing for the Group is significant mostly for two reasons: it later served his ability to direct a rising generation of Method actors, including Marlon Brando, Julie Harris, Lee J. Cobb, and James Dean, on stage and screen; and it provided him left-wing (some have said even Stalinist) political affiliations that later he “named” to HUAC. Although the Group Theater disbanded in 1942, Kazan along with Strasberg and other Group alumni established in 1948 the Actors Studio, a school of Method acting in New York City that serves to this day as a training ground for American actors in Group techniques.

Kazan received the New York Drama Critics Award for directing Thornton Wilder’s *The Skin of Our Teeth* (1942), and from that point he began the legendary period during which he directed a series of extraordinary plays that defined American drama of the mid-twentieth century. His collaboration with Tennessee Williams resulted in four seminal Broadway productions, including Williams’s Pulitzer Prize–winning plays *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947) and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955). His direction of Arthur Miller’s *All My Sons* (1947) and the Pulitzer Prize–winning *Death of a Salesman* (1949) cemented his reputation as a director of deeply American-themed works that called for outsized raw emotionality in performance.

A man of exceeding ambition, Kazan launched a successful film career even while he was America’s foremost theater director. His first major film, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* (1945), a melodrama about an Irish family and their alcoholic father, began what seemed to be a penchant to direct “social problem” pictures. *Gentleman’s Agreement* (1947), for which he won his first Oscar, dealt with anti-Semitism; *Pinky* (1949) with miscegenation; *Panic in the Streets* (1950), a noirish thriller, with disease control. But it was the 1951 film version of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, the only one of his stage works Kazan directed for the screen, that established Marlon Brando as the most compelling film actor of his generation, and Kazan as the master director of the Method in cinema. Kazan’s films from then on were marked by powerful star performances, most notably

On the Waterfront (1954) (another Best Director Oscar) in which Brando was a conscience-stricken former prizefighter turned mob informer; and *East of Eden* (1955), an adaptation of John Steinbeck's novel, in which James Dean captured the angst of misunderstood adolescence caught in archetypal Oedipal conflict.

Kazan struggled with his decision to provide names to HUAC, but once he testified—naming, among others, former Group colleagues Clifford Odets, John Garfield, and Lee Strasberg—he maintained he was glad he had done it, a position he modified later in life. The decision seems even today to affect readings of his work: *On the Waterfront* has been seen as a treatise defending the morality of informing; *America, America* (1963), a semiautobiographical film about Kazan's family emigrating from Greece, proclaims his deep roots in a particularly American story of identity and self-denial. After his testimony, he had no trouble getting work, but many of the writers and actors and directors who had refused to testify were blacklisted, and had trouble getting jobs for the rest of their lives. So deep was the rift in the Hollywood creative community that almost 50 years after his Congressional testimony, when Kazan was awarded a special Lifetime Achievement Oscar in 1999, his appearance at the Academy Awards ceremony prompted a flurry of protestations and denunciations.

In the 1960s Kazan turned the majority of his creative attention to becoming a best-selling novelist; he succeeded, though with limited critical success. He died, in 2003, at the age of 94.

See also: *East of Eden*; *On the Waterfront*; *Splendor in the Grass*; *Streetcar Named Desire*, A

Selected Filmography

The Last Tycoon, *The* (1976); *Splendor in the Grass* (1961); *A Face in the Crowd* (1957); *East of Eden* (1955); *On the Waterfront* (1954); *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1954); *Gentleman's Agreement* (1947); *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* (1945)

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—Robert Cowgill

KEATON, BUSTER. Once considered a lesser talent than Charlie Chaplin and Harold Lloyd, Buster Keaton is now regarded by many as the most modern and influential of the silent comedians, and as one of the greatest directors and actors in the history of cinema. Though known as the “Great Stone-Face,” Keaton’s unsmiling visage was subtly mobile, and his minimalist acting was ahead of its time. A daredevil athlete and acrobat who performed his own stunts and directed his own films, his comedies

operate on a grand scale, as Keaton's characters contended against the overwhelming forces of nature and machinery, all the while keeping their mysterious inner equilibrium.

Born Joseph Frank Keaton on October 4, 1895, he was allegedly nicknamed by Harry Houdini after taking a "buster" of a fall down a staircase. By the age of five he was starring in vaudeville with his parents as one of "The Three Keatons." Playing in an almost violent roughhouse act with his father, he received an informal education in timing, pratfalls, and perhaps most importantly, in how not to smile. As an adult, Keaton had a chance encounter with Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle, then the second most popular film comedian in America, who invited him to appear in a short, *The Butcher Boy* (1917). Keaton became Arbuckle's sidekick and eventually his co-star and co-director. He embarked on a more



Actor/director Buster Keaton in costume in 1939. (Library of Congress)

sophisticated and intricate form of comedy when he went solo, making 19 shorts between 1920 and 1923 and 10 features between 1923 and 1928.

One Week (1920), his first important film, followed the construction of a mail-order house and inaugurated Keaton's technique of grappling with immense mechanical props. He used this technique, with great comic effect, in *The Boat* (1922), in which he struggles with a hopelessly sinking watercraft. *The Scarecrow* (1920) and *The Electric House* (1922) showcased Keaton's love of gadgetry: unlike Chaplin, who stressed machinery's alienating potential, Keaton strove to master technology. In *The Navigator* (1925), for instance, Keaton is pitted against his largest prop, an eerily empty, drifting ocean liner. Significantly, *The Navigator* featured Keaton in one of his favorite roles: as a sheltered, hapless young man forced to rise to some overwhelming occasion. This character would be reprised in a rather unsettling way in the *Battling Butler* (1926), in which the Keaton character must prove his manhood by entering into a savage, and disturbingly realistic, boxing match. In *Steamboat Bill, Jr.* (1928), an effete Buster braves cyclones and floods to prove himself to his overbearing father and undergoes his most famous (and dangerous) stunt: a house-front falls on

top of him and he passes through an open window, inches away from cinematic—and literal—death.

Like Lloyd, Keaton's characters succeeded through the classic American formula of hard work and self-reliance. Unlike Lloyd's, however, Keaton's characters tended to be ethereal loners, whose goals of making good occasionally descend almost to the point of bleak pessimism. This can be seen in the Sisyphean image of Keaton caught in a giant paddlewheel in *Daydreams* (1922), or in the nightmarish *Cops* (1922), where he is hunted down by hordes of policemen who multiply with geometric regularity, much like the mobs that pursue Keaton in *Seven Chances* (1926). The coda of *College* (1927) telescopes a happy-ever-after ending into quick dissolves of parenthood, decrepitude, and death. Keaton also turned a dispassionate eye toward Hollywood, lampooning western masculinity in *The Frozen North* (1922) and *Go West* (1925)—in the latter the leading lady is a cow—turning the conflict between Indians and whites into a grotesque burlesque in *The Paleface* (1921), and derisively mimicking D. W. Griffith's triptych *Intolerance* (1916) in *The Three Ages* (1923).

As a director (frequently an uncredited one), Keaton was concerned with the authenticity of action and space. His preference for long takes and long shots preserves the fluidity of motion in continuous space, creating comedy from within the frame's depth of field and presenting his miraculous stunts as they were actually performed, instead of cheating his audiences by relying on camera tricks and editing. Keaton's concern for authenticity included the incredible historical accuracy of his excursions into period Americana. *Our Hospitality* (1923) recreates antebellum America by way of its story of a Hatfield-McCoy type feud, for example, while *The General* (1926)—which most critics claim is his masterwork—captures the Civil War in a way that many consider more convincing than any other Hollywood production, even inviting comparisons to Mathew Brady's stunning photographs. Named after the locomotive whose theft triggers two chases across battle lines, it is Keaton's most perfect stylistic integration of comedic and dramatic storylines.

Although his pictures were generally characterized by a certain cinematic realism, he was not altogether adverse to using sight gags. In his short film *Hard Luck* (1921), for instance, Keaton flubs a pool dive, leaving a hole in the earth from which he emerges years later with a Chinese wife and kids; he also made an exception to the demand for realism with the oneiric passages of *Sherlock Jr.* (1924)—one of the most self-reflexive features ever made in Hollywood—which showcased the stunning special effect of Keaton falling asleep and walking into the screen of the film he's projecting, interacting with a movie within a movie.

Early in his career, Keaton's films had been independently produced by financier Joseph Schenck, who distributed them through different Hollywood studios. In 1928, Schenck persuaded Keaton to sign with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Keaton would come to regard his decision to follow Schenck's advice as the worst mistake of his life, although he had few options in a period of studio monopolization that drove out the first generation of independent filmmakers. Although it may be argued that *The Cameraman* (1928) and *Spite Marriage* (1929) approached the quality of his independent work, after he made these films for MGM, the studio stripped Keaton of his

creative independence, forbidding him from using the improvisational style that had made his films unique. The advent of sound made things even worse, as the newly developed cameras used to lift filmmaking out of the silent era functioned at a painstakingly slow speed, limiting Keaton's ability to shoot his pictures at the frenetic pace he preferred. Sound also revealed Keaton's own deep, husky Midwestern voice, leading the studio to cast him as a graceless rube in progressively worse films. Frustrated, Keaton turned to alcohol, with not unexpected results—he was fired in 1933.

Though no longer a star, Keaton continued to work hard for the rest of his life, eventually returning to MGM as a gagman, making shorts for Columbia and Educational Pictures, appearing on TV and in Samuel Beckett's *Film* (1964) and Chaplin's *Limelight* (1953), and regaining a measure of creative independence by making commercials and industry-sponsored films, such as *The Railroader* (1965). Keaton's reputation was revived after the 1949 publication of James Agee's landmark essay "Comedy's Greatest Era," leading to the rerelease of many of his silent films. He died a happy man on February 1, 1966, acclaimed as a genius around the world.

Selected Filmography

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum (1966); *How to Stuff a Wild Bikini* (1965); *Beach Blanket Bingo* (1965); *Pajama Party* (1964); *It's a Mad Mad Mad Mad World* (1963); *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1960); *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1956); *Limelight* (1952); *In the Good Old Summertime* (1949); *God's Country* (1946); *She Went to the Races* (1945); *San Diego I Love You* (1944); *Li'l Abner* (1940); *The Villain Still Pursued Her* (1940); *The Taming of the Snood* (1940); *Pardon My Berth Marks* (1940); *Nothing But Pleasure* (1940); *One Run Elmer* (1935); *Palooka from Paducah* (1935); *The Invader* (1935); *Allez Oop* (1934); *The Gold Ghost* (1934); *What! No Beer?* (1933); *Speak Easily* (1932); *The Passionate Plumber* (1932); *Parlor, Bedroom and Bath* (1931); *Doughboys* (1930); *Free and Easy* (1930); *The Camera-man* (1928); *Steamboat Bill, Jr.* (1928); *College* (1927); *The General* (1926); *Battling Butler* (1926); *Go West* (1925); *Seven Chances* (1925); *The Navigator* (1924); *Sherlock Jr.* (1924); *Our Hospitality* (1923); *Three Ages* (1923); *The Balloonatic* (1923)

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—*Ihsan Amanatullah*

KEATON, DIANE. Diane Keaton's Oscar-winning turn as Annie Hall, the spirited, slightly scattered romantic interest at the center of Woody Allen's eponymous 1977 romantic comedy, remains one of her best-remembered roles. More than her contemporaries Meryl Streep and Glenn Close, Keaton has perfected a type of character

during her years in the movies: charmingly vulnerable, independent, a bit flighty. Yet Keaton's four-decade career in film belies the notion she is primarily a comedic actress. She showed dramatic range in Oscar-nominated roles as Louise Bryant, radical writer and wife of the communist journalist Jack Reed, in *Reds* (1981); and as Bessie, the selfless, caregiving aunt struck with leukemia in *Marvin's Room* (1996). Collaborators and critics have remarked on Keaton's incisive intelligence and work ethic, qualities that also account for the actress's staying power in Hollywood.

Born Diane Hall in Los Angeles on January 5, 1946, Keaton enjoyed a comfortable upbringing in Southern California. In 1965, she moved to New York City to study under Sanford Meisner, mentor of acting luminaries including Gregory Peck, Grace Kelly, and Robert Duvall. In New York, Keaton landed a part in the Broadway ensemble cast of *Hair*, the musical celebration of 1960s free love, and performed in numerous cabaret acts. Breakout film roles came in *Lovers and Other Strangers* (1970), *The Godfather* (1972), and *The Godfather: Part II* (1974). From the beginning, Keaton displayed an independent streak that put her somewhere on the peripheries of both youth culture and mainstream American femininity. She gained press attention as the only one of *Hair*'s cast members who refused to disrobe; and of her *Godfather* role as Kay Adams-Corleone—the willfully innocent, WASPy wife of Al Pacino's Michael Corleone—Keaton has remarked that she had “no interest in that woman” (Mitchell, 2001).

Keaton's collaborations with Woody Allen better capture the tenor of her rise to stardom during a tumultuous period in America's collective sex life. Many of the Hollywood productions she had grown up with during the 1950s had celebrated the self-sacrificing, stay-at-home housewife as the keeper of domestic calm in a chaotic “man's world.” A wave of films during the 1960s and 1970s broke apart the stratified gender roles of postwar Hollywood. After she played comic roles in early Allen films like *Play It Again, Sam* (1972), *Sleeper* (1973), and *Love and Death* (1975), the nervous energy and humor Keaton brought to Annie Hall—the name combines Keaton's nickname and her birth surname—epitomized the excitements and anxieties of women searching for personal and professional independence at a time of reinvigorated feminism. On the heels of *Annie Hall*, Keaton starred in two more Allen films: the somber *Interiors* (1978) and *Manhattan* (1979). In *Interiors*, Keaton played Renata, the eldest daughter of a well-off family who struggles to accommodate her success as a published poet with spousal jealousy and family turmoil. *Manhattan* was a return to comedy for Allen; but unlike Annie Hall, Keaton's Mary Wilke wastes no opportunity to show off her intellect. The modern American woman could be assertive, aggressive even, Keaton seemed to be saying through her character in *Manhattan*.

Keaton's extremely successful career on the big screen has included its misfires. Her turn as an American actress recruited to work for the Israeli intelligence services in *The Little Drummer Girl* (1984), a cinematic adaptation of a John le Carré novel, received mixed reviews; as did her performance—with its failed attempt at a Southern accent—in *Crimes of the Heart* (1986), in which she starred with Sissy Spacek and Jessica Lange as one of a trio of eccentric Mississippi sisters.

Keaton continues to thrive, however, as more recently she has defied the common wisdom that there are no parts for older actresses in Hollywood. In the 1990s and

2000s, she anchored several lighthearted box-office successes, including *Father of the Bride* (1991), *Father of the Bride: Part II* (1995), *The First Wives Club* (1996), and *Something's Gotta Give* (2003). She received a Best Supporting Actress Oscar nomination for her work on the last film. Keaton has also spent time on the other side of the camera. Directing ventures have included an episode of David Lynch's television series *Twin Peaks* and her debut behind the camera on a feature film, the family drama *Unstrung Heroes* (1995). An interest in photography has involved Keaton in several book projects. She dedicated *Local News* (1999), a collection of mid-century photographs culled from the archives of an out-of-print Los Angeles tabloid, to "those who slip away unnoticed." The line captures something of Keaton's offbeat celebrity: she has parlayed movie success into examining facets of American life deemed less than glamorous by Hollywood standards.

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—Diana Lemberg

KUBRICK, STANLEY. Stanley Kubrick was a prominent director from the mid-1950s until the end of the twentieth century. His films covered a wide range of subject matter and were known for their bizarre, creative, and sometimes controversial subject matter. A director who eventually rejected the Hollywood establishment, he left behind a catalog that includes some of the greatest films of the second half of the twentieth-century.

Kubrick was born on July 26, 1928, in the Bronx, New York. His father, Jacques Kubrick, was a prominent physician, while his mother, Gertrude, was a housewife. Kubrick was not a stellar student, but early on demonstrated a talent for photography. While at Taft High School, his father gave him a 35mm camera, and he immediately took an active interest in the art form. Kubrick's big break occurred when one of his pictures was purchased by *Look* magazine. Upon graduation he was hired by *Look* as a staff photographer. During his time with the magazine, Kubrick also enrolled in classes at Columbia University but never sought a degree. His real education came from his work as a photographer and also by attending film screenings at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Turner, 1988).

His first foray into movies was a film short based on a picture story he had done for *Look*. *Day of the Fight* (1950) focused on the life of boxer Walter Cartier. Kubrick bankrolled the film from his own savings and sold the piece to RKO—netting a \$100 profit. His next work, *Flying Padre* (1951), was partially subsidized by RKO, and its minor success led to his decision to become a feature filmmaker. Borrowing



Film director Stanley Kubrick during production of *The Shining*. (AP/Wide World Photos)

money from his father and uncle, Kubrick embarked on his first full-length film project (Phillips, 2002).

Fear and Desire (1953) was shot on location in the San Gabriel Mountains and tells the story of a chance meeting between two American soldiers and two enemy soldiers. The movie played the art-house circuit and received some favorable reviews. Though Kubrick himself would later dismiss the film, at the time it did serve to encourage him to borrow more money from another family member and to begin work on a second full-length project. *Killer's Kiss* (1955) was set in New York and revolved around the life of a boxer and the girl he desired. It is in this picture that one sees what would be a recurring theme in Kubrick's pictures—dark visions of society engulfed in surreal imagery.

Kubrick's next picture was a foray into film noir. *The Killing* (1956) told the story of a racetrack heist, filmed partially as a series of flashbacks. For the movie Kubrick partnered with producer James Harris, with whom he would work on three additional films. *The Killing* was a critical success and set the stage for the film that would place him in the forefront of Hollywood directors. *Paths of Glory* (1957), starring Kirk Douglas in the title role, still ranks today as one of the greatest antiwar films ever made. Set during the World War I, the film is a condemnation of a system that led to the horrors of trench warfare while simultaneously reflecting the callous attitudes of officers toward their men—man's inhumanity toward man. Douglas was so impressed by Kubrick's work that he hired him to take over the direction of his next film, *Spartacus* (1960), a Roman-era epic based on the life of a gladiator who led a

rebellion against the empire. Unlike his previous films, Kubrick did not have complete control over the picture and often found himself at odds with Douglas, who was not only the film's star but also its executive producer. Despite their differences, however, the two men were able to create a final product that was both a critical and financial success.

Stung by his experiences during the filming of *Spartacus*, and disillusioned by the limitations of Hollywood's studio system, Kubrick made the momentous decision to leave the United States in 1962 and relocate to England, where he bought a small estate in Hertfordshire. He would remain there for the rest of his life. The first picture he shot in England was *Lolita* (1962), an adaptation of Vladimir Nabokov's novel about a professor who marries a widow simply because he is obsessed with her adolescent daughter. In order to heighten the sexually charged character of the film, Kubrick provided viewers with a disturbing twist by emphasizing the black-comedy nature of the illicit relationship.

His next three films formed a trilogy dealing with controversial themes through the lens of science fiction and biting satire. Building on the black-comedy theme from *Lolita*, Kubrick now turned his attention to the futility of war in the nuclear age. *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1964) was an offbeat portrayal of nuclear holocaust, a condemnation of militarism run wild, and a savage parody of the Cold War and its fears. Kubrick's next film, *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), turned out to be a visual, sensorial, and technological masterpiece, and still ranks today as one of the top science fiction films of all time. The third film of the trilogy, *A Clockwork Orange* (1972), is set in England during a dystopic future in which a youth gang, led by a Beethoven-obsessed sociopath, engages in extraordinarily unsettling, ecstatic acts of rape, torture, and physical assault.

In a departure from what had come before, Kubrick next made a long, sprawling period piece, *Barry Lyndon* (1975), which turned out to be his only real commercial failure. A five-year gap between films ended with his adaptation of a Stephen King novel and a return to the themes that had made his previous films so successful. In *The Shining* (1980), viewers enter the nightmarish world of a man (disturbingly portrayed by Jack Nicholson) slowly going insane while he and his family act as caretakers of an isolated mountain lodge. While receiving mixed reviews from critics, it proved to be a box-office success.

In 1987, Kubrick made his third antiwar film, *Full Metal Jacket*. Shot in England, and following filmic offerings such as Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*, Michael Cimino's *The Deer Hunter*, and Oliver Stone's *Platoon*, *Full Metal Jacket* was Kubrick's statement on the senselessness of the Vietnam conflict. Not surprisingly, his last film, *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999), proved controversial. Starring Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman, who were then married, the picture follows a wealthy, New York City couple into a debasing world of eroticism and sexual perversion; a world in which, the director seemed to be saying, there is little hope for redemption. Ironically, Kubrick would not live to see his final cinematic work released, as he died in his sleep on March 7, 1999, just four days after he had delivered the final print of his film.

Selected Filmography

Eyes Wide Shut (1999); *Full Metal Jacket* (1987); *The Shining* (1980); *Barry Lyndon* (1975); *A Clockwork Orange* (1971); *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968); *Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1964); *Lolita* (1962); *Spartacus* (1960); *Paths of Glory* (1957); *The Killing* (1956); *Killer's Kiss* (1955); *The Seafarers* (1953); *Fear and Desire* (1953); *Day of the Fight* (1951)

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—Charles Johnson

LANG, FRITZ. Fritz Lang was one of the most notable of the Austrian and German directors who fled to the United States after Adolf Hitler came to power in the 1930s. Already acclaimed as a major filmmaker after making masterpieces such as *Metropolis* (1927) and *M* (1931), Lang did not quite match the success he had enjoyed in Europe after he arrived in America. He did, however, work steadily for more than two decades and was one of the major forces in creating what came to be known as film noir. Lang's bitterness and cynicism found an unusually suitable outlet in this genre, with his protagonists constantly struggling against their fates.

Born in Vienna in 1890, the son of an architect, Lang studied art in Munich and Paris before serving in the Austrian army during World War I. Convalescing from wounds he had received in battle, Lang tried writing screenplays. His film career began in Berlin as a script reader, and by 1919 he was directing films, many written in collaboration with his second wife, Thea von Harbou. In films such as *Dr. Mabuse: The Gambler* (1922), Lang displayed a deliberate pace and the expressionistic visual style that dominated German filmmaking during the 1920s; *Dr. Mabuse: The Gambler* also introduced Lang's obsession with the shady world of criminals, police, and spies. A visit to America in 1925—especially his experiences in Hollywood and the sight of the New York City skyline—inspired him to make the futuristic *Metropolis*, which would become one of the most iconic films of cinema's early history. In 1931, Lang made the first German sound film, *M*, a haunting portrait of a child killer that served as a template for the director's later film noirs. *M* was characterized by a claustrophobic urban setting, streets that feel like steel traps, and a perverse protagonist (Peter Lorre, in a masterful performance) overwhelmed by forces he cannot evade.

Although the director expressed his concerns about what he felt was the increasing threat of National Socialism in *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse* (1933), he was asked to work for the Nazis by propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels. Instead, Lang fled to Paris, leaving behind his fortune—including a large art collection—as well as his wife, who was a member of the Nazi Party. Although Lang's mother was Jewish, she had converted to her husband's Catholicism when their son was ten. Lang was raised as a Catholic and always identified himself as such.



Austrian-born film director Fritz Lang during his days at Germany's UFA studios in 1927. (Time Life Pictures/Getty Images)

After making the romantic drama *Liliom* (1934), which was later adapted as the Broadway musical *Carnival*, Lang was signed by MGM. This studio was not known for the dark, socially conscious films Lang wanted to direct, and he left after making *Fury* (1936)—an attack on lynch-mob hysteria that starred Spencer Tracy and Sylvia Sydney—and began to make free-lance films. He reunited with Sydney for *You Only Live Once* (1937), about a young couple on the run from the law. Co-starring Henry Fonda, the film was inspired by the real-life outlaws Bonnie and Clyde. With their violence and dark, atmospheric lighting, these first two American films were tentative steps in Lang's evolution toward his fully developed noir style.

Fascinated by the American West, Lang spent periods on a Navaho reservation and used what he observed there to help him make two westerns: *The Return of Frank James* (1940),

with Fonda and Gene Tierney, and *Western Union* (1941), with Randolph Scott and Robert Young. Interestingly, while most of Lang's films are set in urban locations and filmed in black and white, his westerns demonstrate a talent for composing striking Technicolor landscapes.

With World War II raging in Europe, Lang next turned to more topical films. *Man Hunt* (1941) involves a big-game hunter (Walter Pidgeon) on the run from Nazis. The picture co-starred Joan Bennett, who went on to make three more films with Lang and reportedly had an affair with the director. Another example of his early noirs, *Man Hunt* gave Lang a chance to make a personal statement dramatizing the gathering Nazi threat. Released in June 1941, before the United States entered the war and was thus officially neutral, the film attracted the attention of members of Congress, who began an investigation to determine whether the picture could be considered subversive; the investigation was dropped after the events at Pearl Harbor occurred in December of that year.

After *Moontide* (1942), a melodrama with Jean Gabin and Ida Lupino, Lang explored the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia in *Hangmen Also Die!* (1943); the film was based on a story by Bertolt Brecht. *Moontide* and *Hangmen Also Die!* were poorly received, but Lang quickly redeemed himself with films such as *Ministry of Fear* (1944). Based on a Graham Greene novel, *Ministry of Fear* concerns a man (Ray Milland) who has just been released from a mental institution and finds himself forced to flee from both the Nazis, who are pursuing him because he has accidentally been given a secret document, and the police, who suspect him of murder.

Along with films such as Otto Preminger's *Laura* (1944) and Billy Wilder's *Double Indemnity* (1944), Lang's next two offerings were characterized by the mixture of sex, greed, murder, and mystery that are the fundamental elements of film noir. In *Woman in the Window* (1944), for instance, a mild-mannered professor (Edward G. Robinson) finds himself the victim of capricious fate as he falls for a mysterious beauty (Joan Bennett), kills someone in self-defense, and is blackmailed. Lang carried the theme of the random character of fate even further in *Scarlet Street* (1945), often cited as one of his best American films. A meek married man (Robinson again) becomes entangled with an avaricious woman (Bennett), who persuades him to embezzle from his employer. This story of innocence corrupted is one of Lang's most pessimistic.

Lang's next four films are less highly regarded. The talky espionage thriller *Cloak and Dagger* (1946), with a miscast Gary Cooper, is notable as the first film about atomic scientists, though Warner Bros. angered Lang by removing the final scene warning of the dangers of atomic power. In *Secret beyond the Door* (1948), Lang's final film with Joan Bennett, a newly married woman discovers her husband (Michael Redgrave) is unbalanced. Despite similarities to the director's earlier psychological thrillers, *Secret beyond the Door* seems muddled. Widely considered one of Lang's weakest films, *An American Guerilla in the Philippines* (1950) is the story of an American sailor (Tyrone Power) stranded in Japanese-occupied territory during World War II. In *The House by the River* (1950), a minor but efficient noir, a wealthy man (Louis Hayward) kills the family maid (Dorothy Patrick) and tries to frame his brother (Lee Bowman) for the murder.

Lang began his return to form with *Clash by Night* (1952), a love-triangle melodrama with noir touches, featuring standout performances by Barbara Stanwyck, Robert Ryan, Paul Douglas, and, in one of the best of her early efforts, Marilyn Monroe. Lang followed *Clash by Night* with his final western, the truly strange *Rancho Notorious* (1952), with Marlene Dietrich as a singer who runs a hideout for outlaws. Despite interference from producer Howard Hughes, Lang created a stylish blend of western and noir with this film, as a man (Arthur Kennedy), seeking revenge for the murder of his fiancée, poses as an escaped prisoner to infiltrate the hideout.

In *The Big Heat* (1953), Glenn Ford plays a Los Angeles police detective whose wife (Jocelyn Brando) dies in a car bombing intended for him. This portrayal of a dehumanizing quest for revenge is sometimes cited as Lang's best American film. In *The Blue Gardenia* (1953), Norah Larkin (Anne Baxter) believes that while she was drunk, she killed a man (Raymond Burr) who had been making unwanted advances. A remake of Jean Renoir's *La Bête Humaine* (1938) and adapted from an Emile Zola novel,

Human Desire (1954) is one of Lang's darkest noirs. It stars Glenn Ford as a railroad engineer having an affair with the wife (Gloria Grahame) of a drunken, violent co-worker (Broderick Crawford).

The swashbuckler *Moonfleet* (1955) was Lang's first foray into CinemaScope, although it appears that Lang was not particularly comfortable with the wide-screen process. Lang was more successful with his final two American films, both noirs. In *While the City Sleeps* (1956), journalists Edward Mobley (Dana Andrews), Mildred Donner (Ida Lupino), and Mark Loving (George Sanders) stalk a serial killer, Robert Manners (John Barrymore Jr.), with unforeseen consequences. Several plot elements come together during a thrilling chase that winds through New York City streets and down into the underground spaces of the subway system. In the similar *Beyond a Reasonable Doubt* (1956), a publisher, Austin Spencer (Sydney Blackmer), convinces a writer, Tom Garrett (Andrews again), to implicate himself in a murder so that an incompetent district attorney, Roy Thompson (Philip Bourneuf), can be exposed; not surprisingly, the plan backfires. It is noteworthy that his final American film focuses on a consistent Langian theme: the individual struggling against his or her tragic fate.

During the mid-1950s, Lang returned to Germany to realize a film project adapted from a novel written by Lang and his then wife von Harbou. An exotic, mystical story set in India and divided into two films, *The Tiger of Eschnapur* (1958) and *The Indian Tomb* (1959), the project gave the director a chance to try something new. In the end, the pictures did not represent Lang's best efforts, and the U.S. distributor American International reedited the films into a single 90-minute offering, *Journey to the Lost City* (1959).

Lang retreated to firmer ground for his final film, *The 1000 Eyes of Dr. Mabuse* (1960), a continuation of his earlier Mabuse films. Unable to secure financing for further films, the director made his first acting appearance since 1919 in Jean-Luc Godard's *Contempt* (1963). Lang plays himself, a once-great filmmaker relegated to doing work-for-hire, on an ill-conceived adaptation of *The Odyssey*, for a bullying Hollywood producer, Jeremy Prokosch (Jack Palance). Godard's screenplay gave Lang opportunities to reflect upon his career. It may be that his best moment in *Contempt* comes when Brigitte Bardot tells him she likes *Rancho Notorious*, and his expression moves quickly from pleasure to wishing she had picked a better film.

Lang made 25 American films during the studio system era in Hollywood, working on some projects for which he had little affinity and making certain pictures less dark, brutal, sexy, or political than he would have liked. Nevertheless, most of his Hollywood efforts convey his unsentimental personality and eerie, atmospheric style. Although he fit the cliché of the monocled Teutonic perfectionist who demonstrated an antagonistic attitude toward those with whom he worked, he was still able to elicit dozens of outstanding performances from his actors. Initially considered inferior to the films he made in Germany, Lang's American films have now been accepted by critics and fans alike as extremely important cinematic works. Lang died in 1976, in Beverly Hills, California; he was 86.

See also: Big Heat, The; Film Noir; Metropolis; Studio System, The

Selected Filmography

Beyond a Reasonable Doubt (1956); *While the City Sleeps* (1956); *Moonfleet* (1954); *Human Desire* (1954); *The Big Heat* (1953); *Blue Gardenia* (1953); *Clash by Night* (1952); *Rancho Notorious* (1952); *American Guerrilla in the Philippines* (1950); *House by the River* (1950); *Secret beyond the Door* (1948); *Cloak and Dagger* (1946); *Scarlet Street* (1945); *The Woman in the Window* (1944); *Ministry of Fear* (1944); *Hangmen Also Die!* (1943); *Moontide* (1942); *Man Hunt* (1941); *Western Union* (1941); *Return of Frank James, The* (1940); *You Only Live Once* (1937); *Fury* (1936); *M* (1931); *Metropolis* (1927)

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—Michael Adams

LAUREL AND HARDY. Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy were members of one of the most influential comic duos in American movies. Among those who brought the world of vaudeville to the big screen during the transition period from silents to sound movies, they excelled in slapstick comedy, parodies, and situations that would be taken up and used by later generations of admiring artists.

Born Arthur Stanley Jefferson, in Ulverston, Lancashire, England, on June 16, 1890, Stan Laurel was the son of actor-manager Arthur J. Jefferson and actress Madge Metcalfe. He performed with the Levy and Cardwell Juvenile Pantomimes Company from 1907 to 1909. Prior to his meeting with Hardy, he appeared in vaudeville shows and pantomimes in Great Britain. He was an understudy to Charlie Chaplin before appearing in American vaudeville in the 1910s.

Hardy was born Norvell Hardy, on January 18, 1892, in Harlem, Georgia, near Augusta. His father, Oliver Hardy, who served in the Georgia Volunteer Infantry during the Civil War, died when the young Norvell was only 10 months old. In honor of his father, Norvell adopted his name, calling himself Oliver Norvell Hardy. As Hardy grew, he began to fabricate stories about his family and himself. He claimed, for instance, that his father had been an attorney and that at age eight he had sung with Coburn's Minstrels (Gehring, 1990). In reality, after her husband's untimely death, Hardy's mother, Emily (Emmie) Norvell Tant, operated hotels in Madison, and later in Milledgeville, Georgia.

Hardy eventually enrolled at the Atlanta Conservatory of Music, and later at the Georgia Military College in Milledgeville. He worked as a film projectionist from 1910 to 1913, after which he migrated to Jacksonville, Florida, at that time a minor center of film production. An endearingly portly presence on screen, Hardy worked



Portrait of comedy duo Laurel and Hardy. (Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images)

for various studios and appeared with a slimmer comedic partner, Bobby Ray, in *The Paperhanger's Helper* (1925). Significantly, this union with the slender Ray would foreshadow his iconic pairing with Stan Laurel.

In his first short film, *Nuts in May* (1917), Laurel portrayed a mentally challenged man who escapes an institution dressed as Napoleon. In *A Lucky Dog* (1917), he played a poor dog owner, while Hardy was cast as a crook attempting to rob him. In 1921, film producer Hal Roach created a series of short comedy films with Laurel; four years later Roach persuaded Laurel to join the new Comedy All-Stars, a troupe that included Hardy. The first Laurel and Hardy films were *The Second Hundred Years* and *Putting Pants on Philip*, both released in 1927. Between 1927 and 1932, Laurel and Hardy would make 65 films with Roach,

The duo's first sound film was *Unaccustomed as We Are* (1929). Their innovative sound effects and sight gags would eventually be picked up by other early sound filmmakers. During World War II, they made more feature films together, among them *Air Raid Wardens* (MGM, 1943), and *The Bullfighters* (Twentieth Century-Fox, 1945). The government even issued a short film, *The Tree in a Test Tube* (1943), in which the pair demonstrated conservation tips recommended by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

In their work ethic, they differed greatly: Laurel was a workaholic and designed many of the duo's acts. Extremely creative, he kept notepads throughout his house, using them to record his thoughts as they came to him. Hardy, on the other hand, was less interested in working when he was not on the set, enjoying diversions such as gourmet cooking, golf, and gambling. Although master comedians, their films often raised important social questions, as they poked fun at authority figures and members of the upper classes. Vastly significant figures in the early American cinema, Laurel and Hardy would profoundly influence other comedians such as Jack Benny, Lucille Ball, Jackie Gleason, Jerry Lewis, Danny Kaye, and Dick Van Dyke. Oliver Hardy died on August 7, 1957, the result of three debilitating strokes; Stan Laurel died on February 23, 1965, after suffering a heart attack.

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—Ralph Hartsock

LEE, ANG. Ang Lee is a Taiwanese American director, producer, and writer of international renown. Critics widely consider Lee to be one of the most significant filmmakers working today. Over the past 15 years, his reputation has grown considerably, and he has acquired worldwide audiences with films as varied as *The Wedding Banquet* (1993), *Sense and Sensibility* (1995), *The Ice Storm* (1997), *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000), *The Hulk* (2003), and *Brokeback Mountain* (2005). *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* garnered Lee a 2001 Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film, and the controversial but extremely popular *Brokeback Mountain* earned him a 2005 Academy Award for Best Director.

Ang Lee was born in Pingtung, Taiwan, on October 23, 1954. Early on, Lee showed a preference for the arts and for drama in particular; however, his father, a school administrator and stern patriarch, strongly dissuaded him from pursuing the arts and demanded that he follow what was considered a more intellectual, honorable profession (Berry, 2005). Having fared poorly in his university entrance exams, Lee opted to enroll in Taiwan's National Art School, where he received his first formal exposure to theater and graduated in 1975. He then moved to the United States to further his studies, eventually receiving his bachelor's of arts in theater at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, in 1980, and acquiring his MFA in theater from New York University in 1984. During his time as a student filmmaker, Lee developed his skills and defined his vision as an artist, showing preferences for technically sophisticated works that explore the notion of identity and tradition. Lee's talent was not lost on the artistic and academic community, as he won student awards for Best Director and Best Film while at NYU.

Given the filmmaker's connections to Taiwan, China, the United States, and Europe, it is not surprising that Lee's work is both expansive and decidedly cross-cultural. It is also marked by a willingness on Lee's part to openness and risk, from both a formal and a thematic standpoint. Indeed, Lee has a history of utilizing young, unknown actors; taking on difficult topics; and utilizing a range of experimental technical approaches in an attempt to enhance the narrative and visual elements of his films. As is often the case with innovative artists, the quality of Lee's work has proven to be uneven: for instance, while film critics praised him for his stunning use of color and magical realism in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, most found what he did in *Hulk* to be awkwardly executed.

While Lee's films are diverse in terms of subject matter, certain themes and motifs continually emerge within them. The pressures of family and society are given



In 2001, Taiwanese director Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* became the first foreign-language film to earn more than \$100 million in the United States. (AP/Wide World Photos)

Selected Filmography

Taking Woodstock (2009); *Lust, Caution* (2007); *Brokeback Mountain* (2005); *Hulk* (2003); *Chosen* (2001); *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000); *Ride with the Devil* (1999); *The Ice Storm* (1997); *Sense and Sensibility* (1995); *Eat Drink Man Woman* (1994); *The Wedding Banquet* (1993); *Pushing Hands* (1992)

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—Caleb Puckett

LEE, SPIKE. Spike Lee has been one of the most prolific and controversial filmmakers working in American cinema over the past three decades. He occupies a special position in film history as one of the only African American directors to work steadily on films of his own choosing, maintain his creative autonomy, and showcase his work through mainstream studio outlets.

Shelton Jackson Lee was born to musician/composer Bill Lee and schoolteacher Jacquelyn Shelton on March 27, 1957, in Atlanta, Georgia. The family moved to Brooklyn, New York, while Lee was still young. Growing up in New York seems to have influenced his filmmaking, as the city serves as the backdrop for most of his films. Lee enrolled at his father's alma mater, Morehouse College, in 1975. Many of his experiences there were dramatized in his film *School Daze* (1988). After graduating, Lee entered the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University. A friendship between Lee and another black filmmaker, Ernest Dickerson, formed while he was there. The friendship has endured, and Dickerson has worked as the director of photography on seven of Lee's pictures, including his film school thesis at NYU, *Joe's Bed-Stuy Barbershop: We Cut Heads* (1981), which won the Academy Award for Best Student Film.

Success beyond film school was hard earned. Lee's first post-film school project, about a bike messenger who is forced to become the family breadwinner in the wake of his mother's death, had to be abandoned after financing disappeared (Lee et. al., 1991). The setback seemed to fuel Lee's passion for filmmaking, however; it also taught him valuable lessons about the practical end of the industry, lessons that he put to good use in making his first feature, *She's Gotta Have It* (1986). The story of a black woman, Nola Darling (Tracy Camilla Johns), and her relationships with three very different men, the picture was shot independently over 12 days on a budget of \$175,000 and went on to make \$7 million. Interestingly, one of Nola's relationships is carried out with "Mars Blackmon," played by Lee, who would become a recurring figure in a string of Nike commercials featuring Michael Jordan.

Lee continued working at a breakneck pace, putting out a film every year between 1988 and 1992. While *School Daze* (1988), *Do the Right Thing* (1989), *Mo' Better Blues* (1990), *Jungle Fever* (1991), and *Malcolm X* (1992) proved to be somewhat controversial offerings, their critical and box-office success made it clear that audiences would turn out to view "A Spike Lee Joint." The films also demonstrated Lee's commitment to empowering black talent. Indeed, several of the actors who worked in these early Lee films—including Laurence Fishburne, Samuel L. Jackson, Wesley Snipes, Martin Lawrence, and Oscar winners Denzel Washington and Halle Berry—would go on to become Hollywood stars.

Lee stayed productive through the mid-1990s, working on a wide range of films. The semiautobiographical *Crooklyn* (1994), written by his sister Joie and brother Cinque, explored the challenges of a black Brooklyn family facing the death of its matriarch. (Lee has taken advantage of his talented family on a number of occasions: Beyond co-writing the script for *Crooklyn*, Joie has also starred in several of Lee's other films; his brother David has worked for Lee as a composer and his father as a cinematographer.) In 1995, Lee directed the crime thriller *Clockers*, based on a Richard Price novel; Martin Scorsese, one of Lee's cinematic influences, produced the film. He released two films in 1996: *Girl 6*, about a black actress who becomes a phone sex



Filmmaker Spike Lee arrives at the Bellas Artes museum in Caracas, July 24, 2009. Lee was in Venezuela to give a seminar to young film students. (AP/Wide World Photos)

operator because she cannot find work, and *Get on the Bus*, an intimate look at a group of men headed to the Million Man March.

In 1997, Lee partnered with HBO to make the documentary *4 Little Girls*. An examination of the 1963 bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, the film was nominated for an Academy Award. He has made two other, Emmy Award-winning documentaries for the cable network: *Jim Brown: All American* (2002), and *When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts* (2006). Lee teamed up with Denzel Washington for a third time in *He Got Game* (1998) and rounded out the decade by directing his first film with a predominantly white cast, *Summer of Sam* (1999).

The start of the new millennium found Lee exploring the issue of racial stereotyping in the biting satire *Bamboozled* (2000). A powerful examination of the historical legacy of denigrating black images in popular media, the film was a box-office failure. Still, Lee understood how important the issue of stereotyping was in America, and the concert film *The Original Kings of Comedy* (2000), as well as his film adaptation of Roger Guenveur Smith's Obie Award-winning *A Huey P. Newton Story* (2001), can be read as critical companion pieces to *Bamboozled*.

Neither of Lee's next two narrative features was financially successful, although both addressed significant cultural issues. *25th Hour* (2002) was one of the first major studio films to address the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks; while *She Hate Me* (2004), explored shifting familial mores, reproductive rights, and economic corruption.

Lee's feature output has slowed, although he has directed several short films and done television work including the short-lived drama series *Sucker Free City* (2004).

Teaming once again with Denzel Washington, Lee scored with *Inside Man* in 2006, although his *Miracle at St. Anna* of 2008 failed. Lee has claimed that critics and audiences cannot separate his public persona from his work, but he has expressed no desire to make a clean break between the two.

Selected Filmography

Miracle at St. Anna (2008); *Lovers & Haters* (2007); *Inside Man* (2006); *She Hate Me* (2004); *25th Hour* (2002); *Bamboozled* (2000); *The Original Kings of Comedy* (2000); *Summer of Sam* (1999); *He Got Game* (1998); *4 Little Girls* (1997); *Get on the Bus* (1996); *Girl 6* (1996); *Lumière and Company* (1995); *Clockers* (1995); *Crooklyn* (1994); *Malcolm X* (1992); *Jungle Fever* (1991); *Mo' Better Blues* (1990); *Do the Right Thing* (1989); *School Daze* (1988); *She's Gotta Have It* (1986)

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—Mikal Gaines

LEWIS, JERRY. A popular comedian and actor during the 1950s and 1960s, Jerry Lewis achieved worldwide fame both on stage and in film for his slapstick comedy routines. He also proved himself to be an equally talented screenwriter and director. Lewis's numerous accomplishments as a comedic actor and filmmaker have earned him an important place in American cinematic history.

Jerry Lewis was born Jerome Levitch on March 16, 1926, in Newark, New Jersey. His parents, Daniel Levitch and Rae Brodsky, were both actors who performed onstage professionally as Danny and Rae Lewis. In 1932, when Lewis was six years old, he made his acting debut when he performed a rendition of the song "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?" in the Catskills, New York. In 1942, when Lewis was 16 years old, he quit high school to perform professionally as a comedian. On July 25, 1946, he performed onstage with singer Dean Martin at the 500 Club in Atlantic City, New Jersey. This performance, in hindsight, was a pivotal moment in Lewis's acting career. Their onstage chemistry and comedy routine quickly became popular. They performed regularly in nightclubs and theaters across the country. From April 1949 through June 1953, the duo also performed on their own radio show, the *Dean Martin & Jerry Lewis Show*.



Actor and comedian Jerry Lewis shares a banana split with Pierre, a five-year-old chimpanzee who's trying to make a name for himself in the movies, 1950. (AP/Wide World Photos)

In 1949, the comedy team made their motion picture debut with *My Friend Irma*. The popularity of this first movie led to the duo's collaboration on 16 other movies between 1949 and 1956. In all of their films, Martin played the straight man to Lewis's slapstick comedy acts. Some of their most popular movies included *At War with the Army* (1950), *The Stooge* (1953), and *Money from Home* (1953). The team's last two movies, *Artists and Models* (1955) and *Hollywood or Bust* (1956), are considered by many critics to be their best two movies. In 1956, Martin and Lewis ended their working relationship.

Following his split with Martin, Lewis embarked on a very successful solo acting career. In 1960, he also made his screenwriting and directorial debut with the movie *The Bellboy*. In 1960, he produced and starred in the smash hit *Cinderfella*. Lewis also wrote, directed, and performed in *The Ladies Man* (1961), *The Errand Boy* (1961), and *The Nutty Professor* (1963). Many critics consider *The Nutty Professor* to be Lewis's movie masterpiece because it highlighted his skillful use of the camera to execute a comedy routine. Other popular movies made by Lewis included *The Patsy* (1964), *The Disorderly Orderly* (1964), *The Family Jewels* (1965), in which Lewis took on seven different roles, and *Three on the Couch* (1966), in which he played four different roles.

In 1967, Lewis taught a graduate course in film direction at the University of Southern California. Some of his students included George Lucas, Francis Ford Coppola, and Steven Spielberg. In 1971, he published the book *The Total Film-Maker*.

During the early the 1970s, Lewis directed and starred in two additional movies. In 1970, *Which Way to the Front* was released; and *The Day the Clown Died*, shot in 1972, was never released due to conflicts among the backers, producers, and Lewis. Throughout the rest of the decade, Lewis devoted most of his attention to being the National Chair and spokesman for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. Actively involved in the fight for a cure since the 1940s, Lewis has been a tireless host and fund-raiser on the annual Labor Day Muscular Dystrophy Telethon, which began in 1966. In 1983, he returned to acting in his critically acclaimed role in the Martin Scorsese film *The King of Comedy*.

In total, Lewis starred in 63 motion pictures, 17 of which he directed, 14 of which he produced, and 11 of which he wrote. His brilliant comedy routines established him as one of the world's most famous funnymen. Equally important, the Martin and Lewis comedy team is also considered to be one of the most successful teams in American cinematic history. Lewis's talents as a comedic actor, screenwriter, producer, and director have earned him an important place in America cinematic history.

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—Bernadette Zbicki Heiney

LLOYD, HAROLD. Harold Clayton Lloyd was one of the most successful actor/comedians of the silent film era. Between 1913 and 1947, he made almost 200 films, both silents and “talkies,” rivaling Charlie Chaplin as one of the industry's top money-makers. Lloyd's on-screen persona the “Glass Character,” with his signature tortoiseshell horn-rimmed glasses, was an earnest mild-mannered character who faced adversity and triumphed, a man to whom people in the 1920s could relate. Known for his very physical comedy, Lloyd has been characterized as “The King of Daredevil Comedy.” In addition to his acting career, Lloyd produced several movies and film compilations and was involved in radio and television. In 1953, at the 25th annual Academy Awards, he received an honorary Oscar for Lifetime Achievement, recognizing nearly a half-century of filmmaking.

Lloyd was born April 20, 1893, in Burchard, Nebraska, to James Darsie “Foxy” Lloyd and Elizabeth Fraser. His father had several unsuccessful business ventures and moved his family from town to town after each failed attempt to strike it rich. Elizabeth Fraser had dreamed of becoming an actress, but while visiting relatives in Nebraska she met and married Lloyd. The stress of Foxy's financial failures and constant relocation, however, took its toll, and Lloyd's parents divorced in 1910. After receiving a \$6,000 cash settlement in a lawsuit and splitting the enormous sum with his attorney, Foxy

moved to San Diego, where Harold was enrolled in high school and began starring in high school plays. By 1912, Harold had joined the Burwood Stock Company, which was headed by John Lane Connor, an early mentor to Lloyd. Continuing to act in school plays, Lloyd also began teaching at the San Diego School of Expression, another one of Connor's enterprises.

Lloyd arrived in Hollywood in 1913 and found work with Universal as an extra. It was there that he met Hal Roach, who would be an important force in Lloyd's career. Roach soon began making one-reel comedies starring Lloyd as "Willie Work," and Pathé Films eventually offered Roach a distribution contract after the release of *Just Nuts* (1915), one of the few surviving films of that period. Lloyd next developed the character of "Lonesome Luke," a variation on Charlie Chaplin's Little Tramp; but it was his "Glasses Character" that allowed him to transform his acting career.

The first of the glasses films was *Over the Fence* (1917). Lloyd convinced Pathé that such "one-reelers" were ideal for distribution while he was developing the character. Released every week or so, these short films allowed audiences to familiarize themselves with the new character. In 1919, he began to make more complex films, such as *Ask Father* (1919), considered one of the best one-reel comedies of the time. Unfortunately, while posing for publicity photos that same year, Lloyd had the thumb and index finger of his right hand ripped off when a prop bomb accidentally exploded, leaving him hovering near death for days. Recovering fully, he wore a prosthetic thumb and finger thereafter.

His most memorable film may be the feature *Safety Last* (1923), where his character is seen hanging from the hands of a clock high above a busy street. Audiences loved these stunts, and Lloyd, it seems, enjoyed his reputation as a daredevil actor willing to take chances with his life. *Safety Last* turned out to be a wildly popular film, one of the last he would make with Hal Roach. In 1924, he became an independent producer, releasing *Girl Shy* (1924), *The Freshman* (1925), *Kid Brother* (1927), and his last silent film, *Speedy* (1928). In 1929, he made the transition to sound with *Welcome Danger* (1929). Sadly, he released only six more films between 1929 and 1947.

Harold Lloyd married his leading lady, Mildred Davis on February 10, 1923. They had two children: Gloria and Harold Clayton Lloyd Jr. (b. 1931). They also had an adopted daughter, Gloria Freeman, renamed Marjorie Elizabeth Lloyd. In 1926, Lloyd started construction on his Beverly Hills estate, "Greenacres," a 44-room mansion on 16 sprawling acres. Lloyd died of prostate cancer at the age of 77 on March 8, 1971. After his death, Lloyd's beloved Greenacres was opened for public tours from May 1973 to February 1974.

Selected Filmography (Director)

Just Neighbors (1919); *The Lamb* (1918); *Over the Fence* (1917); *Pinched* (1917)

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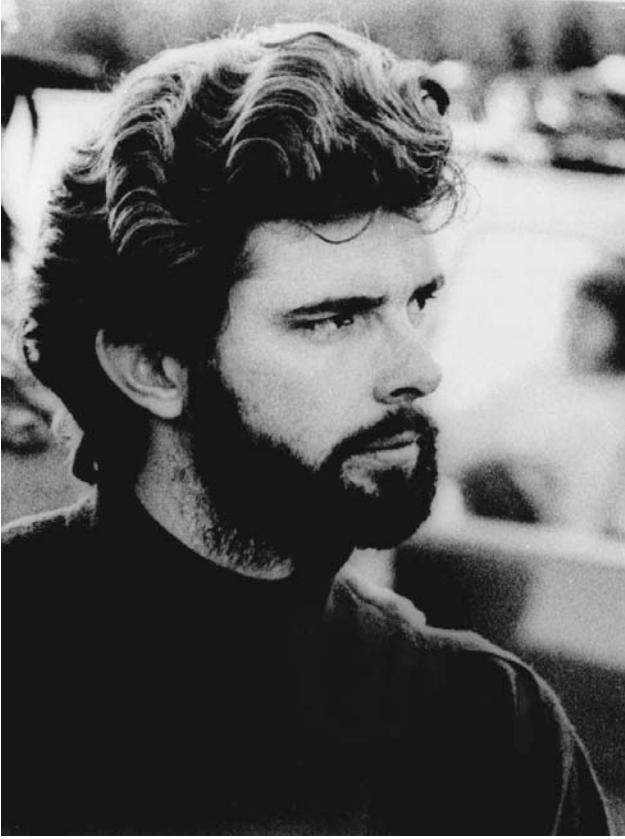
—Katie Simonton

LUCAS, GEORGE. As a screenwriter, director, and producer, George Lucas has been one of the most influential figures in the American cinema. Not only did he craft some of the most successful films of all time, he pioneered—through his production company Lucasfilm and its many subsidiaries—a number of innovative technologies that continue to reshape modern cinema.

Even before his graduation from the film school at the University of Southern California, Lucas had become associated with a number of young filmmakers who wanted to escape the constraints of Hollywood's studio system. With Francis Ford Coppola, he was instrumental in creating American Zoetrope, a production company headquartered in San Francisco that was designed to utilize younger talent and engage in a type of *cinéma vérité*. Coppola became an early mentor who helped Lucas create and sell his first professional films, *THX 1138* (1971) and *American Graffiti* (1973). The latter was a coming-of-age film loosely based on Lucas's own adolescent years of "cruisin'" in Modesto, California, just prior to the cultural convulsions of the 1960s. Although the film sparked a nostalgia for this American "age of innocence" (leading to television series such as *Happy Days* and its own multitude of spin-offs), it also employed several innovative techniques—such as intertwining several unrelated narrative threads and integrating original period songs into the narrative schema—that became conventions in subsequent films and even television dramas. Produced on a shoestring budget, the film was a huge commercial success and provided Lucas with the finances and clout he needed to create his own production company (Lucasfilm), which in turn allowed him to pursue other, original projects.

Lucas's next film would become a cultural phenomenon. Originally envisioned as a swashbuckler set in outer space, *Star Wars* (1977) became an industry unto itself in more ways than one, ultimately giving rise to five sequels and prequels and revolutionizing filmmaking in the process. Unable to use existing technology to achieve the effects he envisioned, Lucas established his own special effects studio, Industrial Light and Magic (ILM), and hired John Dykstra to create the technology required. Famously, Dykstra spent over \$1 million before a single frame of film was shot, but the computer-controlled camera he developed forever transformed special effects. Eventually, ILM would become an independent subsidiary of Lucasfilm, winning multiple Academy Awards for its sophisticated visual effects.

As with special effects for his film, Lucas desired sound effects for *Star Wars* that exceeded the capabilities of existing systems, so he experimented with the new sound recording and mixing techniques that would become the basis for Skywalker Sound, another subsidiary of Lucasfilm. By the third installment of the original trilogy, *The Return of the Jedi* (1983), the engineers at Skywalker Sound had developed a state-of-the-art digital system, THX Sound (after *THX 1138*) that has become an industry standard. Like ILM, Skywalker Sound, now completely digital, has won numerous Academy Awards as well as multiple Clio Awards for its successes in television.



Film director George Lucas, shown here in 1974, has directed such films as *American Graffiti* and *THX 1138* and is the creator behind the entire *Star Wars* series. (AP/Wide World Photos)

Beyond its inspiring special effects, *Star Wars* has endured because of the archetypal power of its rather simple narrative. As an undergraduate, Lucas had been introduced to Joseph Campbell's interpretations of world mythology, and it was Campbell's influential study of the hero myth that informed the storyline of the *Star Wars* series. Other films, such as *Labyrinth* (1986, produced by Lucas and directed by Muppets creator Jim Henson), *Willow* (1988, co-written and produced by Lucas), and the *Indiana Jones* series (all co-written and produced by Lucas and directed by Steven Spielberg) reflect similar themes of the heroic quest.

Convinced that the future of filmmaking lay in digital image and sound, Lucas rereleased the original *Star Wars* trilogy in the late 1990s with new digital enhancements. This served as a prelude to the digital technology used in the prequel trilogy that began with *The Phantom Menace* (1999) and continued with *The*

Attack of the Clones (2002), which was the first "virtual" commercial film shot entirely in a high-definition digital format.

In addition to ILM and Skywalker Sound, Lucasfilm has been an incubator for other digital projects. The graphics division was sold in 1986 to Steve Jobs of the Apple Corporation and became Pixar, but Lucas has retained the game division (Lucas Arts) and the eponymous educational foundation and its clearinghouse for interactive technology for home and school known as Editorial.

Selected Filmography

Star Wars: Episode III, Revenge of the Sith (2005); *Star Wars: Episode II, Attack of the Clones* (2002); *Star Wars: Episode I, The Phantom Menace* (1999); *Star Wars: Episode IV, A New Hope* (1977); *American Graffiti* (1973); *THX 1138* (1971)

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—Rodger M. Payne

LUMET, SIDNEY. A venerated American filmmaker, Sidney Lumet directed more than 40 films over a career that lasted longer than half a century. His most notable films include *12 Angry Men*, *Serpico*, *Dog Day Afternoon*, *Network*, and *The Verdict*. He received an honorary Academy Award in 2005, after having received five previous Oscar nominations. Throughout his career, Lumet's films often sympathized with the political left and made arguments for social justice.

Born in Philadelphia on June 25, 1924, Lumet moved with his family to New York City two years later. As a child, he acted in New York's Yiddish Theatre, and he continued to act onstage as a young adult before transitioning to directing television for CBS in the early 1950s. Lumet is strongly identified as a New York filmmaker, with many of his films having been shot on location in the city.

Lumet directed his first feature film, *12 Angry Men*, in 1957. The film is woven through with elements that would become trademark features of the director's subsequent work, including an urban, realist aesthetic and a focus on matters of social justice. In the film, Henry Fonda plays a juror, the only one of 12, who initially believes that a teenage boy on trial for murder may be innocent of the charges against him. Throughout the film, Fonda attempts to convince the other jurors that the boy, who is understood to be poor and of color, is a victim of social prejudice. Although his arguments are at first rejected by his fellow jurors—who are hot, hungry, and, because in their minds the boy is clearly a delinquent, unconcerned that they are making a life and death decision—Fonda slowly brings them around to his socially enlightened way of thinking. Lumet would return to the courtroom as a setting for several other films, including *The Verdict* (1982) and *Find Me Guilty* (2006).

Lumet's characters frequently challenge authority figures. In the Arthur Miller adaptation *A View from the Bridge* (1961), an Italian immigrant community in Red Hook bands together against immigration officials. The story, which Miller penned as a response to Elia Kazan's anticommunist allegory *On the Waterfront*, acts as a critique of the House Un-American Activities Committee and of red-baiting informants. And in one of his best-known films, *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975), Al Pacino plays a likeable bank robber who connects with a New York City crowd that represents a post-Watergate America disillusioned by corrupt authority figures.

In addition to *A View from the Bridge*, several of Lumet's films are sympathetic to the people and ideals of the political left. *Fail-Safe* (1964), for instance, presents viewers with a story in which the United States and the Soviet Union come to the verge of nuclear war, serving as an argument for nonproliferation; and in *Daniel* (1983), an adaptation of E. L. Doctorow's novel *The Book of Daniel*, the children of a fictionalized Julius and Ethel Rosenberg wrestle with the legacy of their parents in the midst of the Vietnam



Director Sidney Lumet arrives at the 2007 LA Film Critics' Choice Awards held at the InterContinental on January 12, 2008, in Los Angeles. (Frederick Brown/Getty Images)

War era. More recently, Lumet's cable television movie *Strip Search* (2004) critiqued the deterioration of civil liberties under President George W. Bush with a story concerning the detainment of an Arab American man.

Arguably Lumet's greatest film, *Network* (1976) takes a satirical behind-the-scenes look at television network news. The Academy Award-winning screenplay, written by Paddy Chayefsky, tells the story of Howard Beale (Peter Finch), an anchorman who suffers an emotional breakdown while on the air. After ratings soar, Diana Christensen (Faye Dunaway), a cutthroat, ratings-driven junior executive, seizes the opportunity to revamp the network's programming schedule, filling it with sensationalistic shows. She develops the "Mao Tse Tung Hour," hosted by a communist and featuring a radical guerrilla group, along with a new show for Beale in which psychics forecast the news. A cautionary tale, the film predicts the rise of

reality television and "entertainment" cable news programs. It is number 66 on the American Film Institute's list of their top 100 movies.

Lumet's diverse filmography ultimately defies rigid definitions, as evidenced by his adaptations of Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express* (1974) and the Broadway musical *The Wiz* (1978). The latter film, having been poorly received by critics and audiences alike, also exemplifies the somewhat uneven nature of his work. Despite this unevenness, Lumet remained a deeply influential and highly lauded director. Sidney Lumet died of lymphoma on April 9, 2011, at his home in Manhattan.

See also: *Serpico*

Selected Filmography

Before the Devil Knows You're Dead (2007); *A Stranger Among Us* (1992); *Q and A* (1990); *Verdict*, *The* (1982); *Network* (1976); *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975); *Serpico* (1973); *The Appointment* (1969); *The Deadly Affair* (1966); *Fail-Safe* (1964); *Long Day's Journey into Night* (1962)

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—Andrew Paul

LUMIÈRE, AUGUSTE AND LOUIS. Auguste Marie Louis Nicolas Lumière was born on October 19, 1862 in Besançon, France, while Louis Jean Lumière was born in the same town on October 5, 1864. Known as the Lumière brothers, they patented the groundbreaking optical device called Cinématographe Lumière, or the cinematograph, on February 13, 1895.

The Lumière family lived in Besançon, where they owned a photographic studio that developed into a prosperous company of photo products. Their family name, meaning “light,” epitomized their business. Auguste and Louis helped their father, Charles Antoine Lumière, run and expand the family enterprise until the beginning of the 1890s. Inspired by Thomas Alva Edison’s Kinetoscope peep-show or viewing machines consisting of individual looking boxes, the Lumière brothers decided to take the images out of the box and make them available for larger audiences. For this they needed a new apparatus. The Lumières were determined to construct a complex device with a threefold function: a camera, a projector, and a film developer or printer (that used perforated paper strips to advance the film roll), all assembled in one tool.

After the Kinetoscope show, the technically talented Louis designed the Lumière film camera. Louis was responsible for the step-by-step development of the cinematograph, a lightweight, handheld motion picture camera, with a mechanism similar to that of a sewing machine. Despite the initial success of his project, Louis was skeptical about the prospects of motion pictures; he believed that cinema was an invention without a future. Instead of pursuing a career in film, he became interested in creating color photography called Autochrome Lumière (1903) and with the autochrome transparency system (1907), followed by Photo-Stereo-Synthesis plates. The latter were three-dimensional images that are the antecedents of today’s holograms. In the 1930s, Louis was still involved with the study of relief cinematography: he explored stereoscopy and stereoscopic films. Meanwhile, Auguste directed many Lumière movies and even appeared in several of their early films. Although he had the idea of constructing the cinematograph, his interest focused rather on medical research on tuberculosis, cancer, and related medical fields, and less on further developments in film.

The first public screening of 10 short Lumière films took place on December 28, 1895, at Salon Indien, the basement of the Grand Café in Paris. Viewers were charged an admission fee to watch filmed reality projected on a large canvas, a screening that afterwards led to many other small group projections and then to mass viewing of moving images, first across Europe and then throughout the whole world. This event inaugurated the birth of cinema as a mass medium and also prefigured the commercial potential of the movies.

The Lumières were fascinated by the idea of capturing reality on film; they recreated the world in a total of over 1,420 films and experimented with a fixed camera on various mundane subjects and episodes of public and private events recorded in black-and-white short, silent films that had a running time ranging from 40 to 50 seconds. Some of their most famous movies include the *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory* (1895) *Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat Station* (1895), *Baby's Breakfast* (1895), and *Teasing the Gardener* (1895). The last two films can be considered the forerunners of today's home videos; additionally, the latter is the precursor of chase movies and comedy films. However, all Lumière films are prototypes of documentaries and newsreels.

The Lumières did not recognize the narrative and entertainment potential of moving pictures; and soon the novelty of their invention ebbed and their popularity faded, along with their financial success. Toward the end of their careers, they worked primarily as inventors and manufacturers of cameras; eventually, however, they were unable to fill the numerous orders they received for film equipment, and ultimately sold their cinematograph patent to the talented entrepreneur Charles Pathé.

Auguste died on April 10, 1954 in Lyon, while Louis died on June 6, 1948 in Bandol. Today, the Institut Lumière in Lyon, established in 1982, commemorates the pioneering work of the Lumière brothers in the film world.

See also: Silent Era, The

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—Réka M. Cristian

LUPINO, IDA. Ida Lupino had a successful acting career in the 1930s and 1940s. However, she is best known as one of the few successful women directors in post-World War II cinema. Lupino's films addressed the traumatic aspects of life during the Cold War with a particular focus on women's limited public roles.

Lupino was born on February 4, 1918, in London to Stanley Lupino, a comedian and playwright, and Connie Emerald, a musical-comedy performer. A child actress, Lupino attended the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. She came to Hollywood in 1933, signing with Paramount as "the English Jean Harlow." Lupino generally played

older women in B-films such as *Peter Ibbetson* (1935) with Gary Cooper and *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1939) with Basil Rathbone. A bout with polio in the late 1930s almost terminated her career, and Lupino would later use the experience in her film *Never Fear*. Lupino's greatest success came in the early 1940s when she worked alongside Humphrey Bogart in *High Sierra* (1941) and Edward G. Robinson in *The Sea Wolf* (1941). She won a New York Film Critics award for her work in *The Hard Way* (1942).

Lupino never seemed satisfied with just acting. In the 1930s, she had some success as a classical musical composer. She appeared on several movie soundtracks, including *The Man I Love* (1947), as a singer and piano player. By the mid-1940s, she expressed aspirations to direct or produce. In 1946, she became an uncredited co-producer on *War Widow*. Two years later, she coproduced a low-budget thriller, *The Judge*. In 1949, Lupino and television producer Anson Bond formed Emerald Productions, later renamed The Filmmakers. When the director of Emerald's 1949 feature film, *Not Wanted*, suffered a heart attack, Lupino stepped in to complete the film. She also co-wrote and co-produced it. Like many of The Filmmakers' productions, the film is a melodrama that focuses on a social problem and possesses elements of film noir. *Not Wanted* addressed unwed motherhood. *Outrage* (1950) focused on rape, *Never Fear* (1949) centered on polio, and *Hard, Fast, and Beautiful* (1951) told the story of a young tennis player with a dominating mother. Lupino directed these films along with *The Hitchhiker* (1953) and *The Bigamist* (1953). She also wrote the screenplays for *Never Fear*, *Outrage*, and *The Bigamist*, as well as the script for *Private Hell 36* (1954). None of the films were successes at the box office, and The Filmmakers collapsed in 1954. However, Lupino's peers recognized her talents by giving her the honor of presenting the Oscar for Best Film Direction at the 1950 Academy Awards. She was one of a very few women directors at the time. She directed her last Hollywood feature film, *The Trouble with Angels*, in 1966.

Lupino, who once stated that she preferred to focus on the talents of others, seemed most comfortable behind the camera. As an actress, she worked slowly. As a director, she gained a reputation for working quickly and staying on budget. She also used location shooting long before it became common to do so. Much as she enjoyed directing, however, acting paid the bills. Lupino continued to act through the 1950s, in films such as *On Dangerous Ground* (1951) and in the 1957–1958 television comedy series *Mr. Adams and Eve*. Lupino earned two Emmy nominations for her acting. In the 1960s and 1970s, she only acted occasionally, undoubtedly because she did not need to do so. She derived more satisfaction from directing. Lupino appeared in Sam Peckinpah's *Junior Bonner* (1972) before making her final big-screen appearance in *My Boys Are Good Boys* (1978). A 1977 *Charlie's Angels* episode served as her last television appearance.

Lupino, who wrote scripts for several television shows in the 1950s, became one of the busiest directors in the medium in the 1960s. She directed episodes of *Dr. Kildare*, *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir*, *The Virginian*, *Gilligan's Island*, *The Twilight Zone*, *77 Sunset Strip*, and *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*. Although honored by film societies and museums today, ironically, Lupino was slow to recognize her own contributions to cinema and

television. She seemed to think that any attention she received was due only to the fact that she was a woman who had worked in an almost exclusively male field. After fielding numerous queries about her directorial accomplishments, Lupino realized at the end of her life that she was an exceptional director. She died on August 3, 1995.

See also: Women in Film

Selected Filmography (Director)

The Trouble with Angels (1966); *The Bigamist* (1953); *The Hitchhiker* (1953); *Hard, Fast, and Beautiful* (1951); *Outrage* (1950); *Never Fear* (1949); *Not Wanted* (1949)

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—Caryn E. Neumann

LYNCH, DAVID. Emerging from a background in painting, David Lynch, born on January 20, 1946, in Missoula, Montana, is Hollywood's most unlikely filmmaker—a creator of dreams and alternative realities, abstractions and textures, deformity and viscera, and mystery and darkness. Despite a relatively meager output of films—only six in 17 years (and one of those an offshoot of his television work)—Lynch's twisted vision has been carved into the minds of moviegoers on the strength of his visual imagery.

After making a couple of short films and attending the American Film Institute's Center for Advanced Film Studies, Lynch completed *Eraserhead*, the bizarre tale of a man living with his deformed baby in an industrial wasteland. Featuring the work of two frequent Lynch collaborators—the crisp black-and-white photography of Frederick Elmes and the aural constructions of soundman Alan Splet—the film eventually became a *succès de scandale*. In an odd embrace by Hollywood, the perceptive Mel Brooks offered Lynch the job of directing *The Elephant Man*, the Victorian-era story of the hideously deformed, but internally pure, John Merrick. Eight Oscar nominations followed, and so did an offer from the less perceptive Dino De Laurentiis to direct the \$60 million sci-fi adaptation of Frank Herbert's opus *Dune*, a monumental failure on every level. Lynch, however, returned with *Blue Velvet*, a strange film noir that continues the explorations begun in *Eraserhead*.

Since then, Lynch's film work has been both sparse and subpar—his *Wild at Heart* took the top prize at the Cannes Film Festival, but its excessive violence turned off most viewers, while his *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* seemed a lazy way of squeezing a theatrical release out of his television series. *Twin Peaks*, ABC television's gutsy foray into experimental drama, has proven to be Lynch's chief contribution to popular culture. Producing the series and directing numerous episodes, Lynch managed to bring

his vision of a dark and troubled America directly into America's living rooms. While several film projects such as *Ronnie Rocket* and *One Saliva Bubble* have been rumored but have never materialized, Lynch has been branching out into music (producing an album by singer Julee Cruise and creating the *Industrial Symphony #1* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in 1991), photography, installations, and a return to painting. "All my films are about trying to find love in hell" (quoted by Greg Olson in *Film Comment*, May-June 1993).

Selected Filmography

Mulholland Dr. (2001); *Wild at Heart* (1990); *Blue Velvet* (1986); *Dune* (1984); *The Elephant Man* (1980); *Eraserhead* (1978)

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—Daniel Curran

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MANN, MICHAEL. Michael Kenneth Mann was born in Chicago, Illinois, on February 5, 1943. His father was a Ukrainian immigrant, his mother a local girl. He earned an English degree from the University of Wisconsin (Madison), followed by graduate studies at the London International Film School. Although from the same generation as New Hollywood directors like Coppola, Scorsese, Spielberg, and Lucas, Mann's Midwestern roots and international education set him apart. His most significant formative cinematic influence was *Dr. Strangelove* (1964). Mann claims to have learned from Stanley Kubrick's Cold War satire that filmmaking could be simultaneously accessible and socially conscious. His early work reflects *Strangelove's* radical impulses. The nonfiction *Insurrection* (1968) documented the Paris student revolts, which also inspired the rarely seen experimental short *Juanpuri* (1971). His interest in 1960s politics also surfaced in *Ali* (2001).

Mann's cinematic skills are readily discernible in his work; and, in the manner of many latter-day filmmakers, Mann often directs, writes, and produces his pictures. He uses a coterie of cast and crew (which has included two of the biggest names in American film acting, Robert De Niro and Al Pacino), and has perfected a powerfully expressive mise-en-scène. Many of his films contain distinctive color schemes, and he has used high-definition video in films and television shows such as *Ali*, *Robbery Homicide Division* (CBS, 2002–03), *Collateral* (2004), and *Miami Vice* (2006). As Mann makes clear, he uses the latter process not to reduce costs, as it does not, but because it enhances the specific qualities of the film image. Interestingly, his narratives are almost exclusively concerned with men who exist in morally decaying societies. He valorizes protagonists who obey a code of morality and duty, and demeans their antagonists who do not. Clashes between pairs of strong but divergent male characters drive the plots of *Manhunter* (1986), *Heat* (1995), *The Insider* (1999), and *Collateral*.

Mann's fondness for buddy narratives appears in his early television work. He wrote for *Starsky and Hutch* (ABC, 1975–79), and in 1979, he directed the made-for-television movie *The Jericho Mile*, about a Folsom State Prison inmate who was persuaded to try out for the Olympic track team. Committed to narrative realism, Mann employed several Folsom inmates as actors in this picture. The film proved popular

with both viewers and critics, winning multiple Emmy Awards, including one for Mann's co-written script. Following the success of *Jericho Mile*, Mann became the executive producer for *Miami Vice* (NBC, 1984–89), a character-driven cop show that focused, rather atypically for the period, on moral questions. (In 2006, Mann directed the film version of *Miami Vice*.) Putting his stamp on the show, Mann helped to shape 1980s pop culture. Adopting an “MTV” aesthetic, consisting of glossy advertising images and a prominent soundtrack, *Miami Vice* provided audiences with glamorous characters and showcased pop songs, cutting-edge fashion, luxury brands, and Miami itself. The show's soundtrack topped the charts for months, and young men adopted the fashion sense of the leading male characters, marking the birth of the “metrosexual.” Sonny Crockett's (Don Johnson) ensembles, including pastel T-shirts under expensive Italian suits and sockless loafers, remain emblematic of the decade.

In order to become intimately familiar with the literal, psychological, and emotional spaces that his characters inhabit, Mann does extensive research on his films. His obsessive attention to detail and procedural verisimilitude tends to be expressed in powerful and provocative ways in the cold, clinical, compulsive professionalism of his films' male characters. Even though he has not yet compiled an extensive filmography, the pictures that he has made reflect the painstaking work process that he employs.

Again, Mann's films tend to be character-driven examinations of angst-ridden men. This has remained the case even when he has ventured into the realm of the genre film. In his 1992 adaptation of James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*, for example, Mann produced what, on one level, was a traditional genre film, although he sought to trope the Eurocentrism that marked both the novel and other film adaptations of this literary work. Similarly, in *Heat*, Mann generally stayed with the framework of the conventional detective/gangster film, yet he also sought to expose the psychological and emotional wounds suffered by both the good cop (Al Pacino) and the bad criminal (Robert De Niro). This sense of depicting male characters marked by a certain tortured masculinity has become a trademark of Mann's films.

See also: Ali; Insider, The

Selected Filmography

Public Enemies (2009); *Miami Vice* (2006); *Ali* (2001); *The Insider* (1999); *Heat* (1995); *Last of the Mohicans* (1991); *Thief* (1981); *Insurrection* (1968)

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—Gerald Sim

MARX BROTHERS, THE. If you have never seen one of the Marx Brothers' movies, then stop reading and find a way to watch one—now. Not one of the tired later pictures like *Go West* (1940) when the brothers worked under the formulaic thumb of MGM, but an early MGM delight like *A Night at the Opera* (1935) before the formula had calcified. Or better yet one of their anarchic Paramount productions like *Horsefeathers* (1932), which will prove to you that the movies have lost their capacity to be this strange, this mad, and this funny.

If you *have* laughed at the Marx Brothers, then the only question that matters is what is your favorite Marx Brothers movie? For many it is *Duck Soup* (1933): Groucho as Rufus T. Firefly, leader of Freedonia, leading the whole cast as he sings “to war, to war/ to war we gotta go/ hi-dee hi-dee/ hi-dee hi-dee/ hi-dee hi-dee ho”: it’s one of the transcendent moments in the movies. If you are ever lucky enough to see it in a theater, stand in the back of the house and wait until the laughter rolls toward the screen in an explosive wave of joy that at times drowns the punch lines.

There were four of them (yes, brothers in real life), and then there were three when deceptively funny straight man Zeppo was shed after the brothers moved from Paramount to MGM in 1934. Their act could only have grown from vaudeville. Chico (Leonard by birth), the oldest, affected an Italian accent and played piano in a swaggering, finger-pointing style; Harpo (Adolph), mute (in the act, not in life), donned a curly wig, played the harp, and chased scantily clad women (not in life), behavior lewd enough in the pre-Code Paramount Pictures to lead some of the audience in repertory screenings in the 1930s to hiss the screen. Groucho (Julius Henry) used greasepaint to smear a huge mustache and eyebrows on his face and delivered a steady mixture of deadpan sarcasm, caustic insults, and brilliant wordplay; but if any of his jokes was worth a groan, he always let the audience know he knew it. By 1925, they had a Broadway hit, *The Cocoanuts*, written by George S. Kaufman with help from Morrie Ryskind and songs by Irving Berlin, and it ran 375 performances; it was turned into a dreadfully stagy early sound film in 1929. It was followed by another Broadway show, *Animal Crackers*, also by Kaufman and Ryskind, and it became their second dreadfully primitive and stagy early sound film in 1930. Small matter: the Marx Brothers could survive bad sound, and they *thrived* on clunky supporting acting; it was the slick studio work in their later MGM films that they couldn’t overcome.

Irving Thalberg, chief of production at MGM, tried to shape their act by making them appear lovable to everyone except themselves and the tiffany studio’s safely snooty villains. His meddling had mixed artistic and financial results: receipts for the Marx Brothers MGM films, even their most successful ones, indicate they never attained the box-office success of, say, Charlie Chaplin, or even the later Abbott and Costello. And the most loving fans will admit that of the 13 movies they made together, the 4 that were produced after 1940 are depressing. The old fizz flattened, exhaustion haunts the proceedings.

But as Clifton Fadiman put it in his rave review for *A Night at the Opera*, “the Marxes are quite funny enough to be taken seriously”; and while he flatly vowed not to construe “their impertinent treatment of the social properties . . . as a revolt against the constrictions of American life, or as proletarian propaganda” (1935, 322)—a



The Marx Brothers, a team of sibling comedians, appeared in vaudeville, stage plays, film, and television in a successful career spanning five decades. Pictured from top to bottom are Zeppo, Harpo, Groucho, and Chico Marx. (Library of Congress)

vow all true Marxists are willing to take—it's clear the Marx Brothers have shown to nearly every comic who has been influenced by them (and that includes Woody Allen and Jerry Seinfeld and Chris Rock and Jon Stewart) that the only way to combat the restrictions, class absurdities, and ethnic barriers of American life is to find a way to reiterate Groucho's declaration in *Duck Soup*: "This is war!"

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—Robert Cowgill

MAY, ELAINE. Elaine May began her rise to fame by performing in America's first improvisational theater, The Compass Theater (which evolved into The Second City). She became a household name in 1957 as half of Nichols and May, the comedy partnership she formed with Mike Nichols (who would later become known as a director of Broadway and Hollywood). In the 1970s and 1980s, she emerged as one of Hollywood's first and most successful female directors and screenwriters.

May was born Elaine Berlin on April 21, 1932, in Philadelphia. As a child, she performed on stage and on radio with her father, Jack Berlin, who led his own traveling Yiddish theatrical company. She studied acting under Maria Ouspenskaya before moving to Chicago to sit in on classes at the University of Chicago. There she involved herself in improvisational theater, where she met Nichols. Nichols and May utilized improvisational techniques in television and radio appearances before

appearing on Broadway in a hit revue show, *An Evening with Mike Nichols and Elaine May* (1959). The pair produced three successful albums: *Improvisations to Music* (1958), *An Evening with Mike Nichols and Elaine May* (1960), and *Nichols and May Examine Doctors* (1963). Nichols and May exposed clichéd 1950s American middle-class attitudes toward sex, gender, class, race, celebrity, psychoanalysis, the arts, and more.

May's career as a film director began in 1971 with *A New Leaf*, which she also wrote and starred in (and for which she was nominated for a Golden Globe Award for Best Actress). She plays Henrietta, a dizzy heiress and botanist who becomes the target of a bankrupt playboy, played by Walter Matthau. She followed in 1972 with *The Heartbreak Kid*, based on a screenplay by Neil Simon. The story follows a nice Jewish boy (Charles Grodin) who marries a shrill, stereotypical Jewish American Princess (played by May's daughter, Jeannie Berlin). On their honeymoon, he falls for his blonde fantasy shiksa (Cybill Shepherd), inspiring a series of humorous deceptions.

Her next feature, *Mikey and Nicky* (1976), starred John Cassavetes as a nervous small-time crook who contacts his old friend, played by Peter Falk, to help him evade a hitman (Ned Beatty). The narrative extends over the course of one night, as the men descend into the dark recesses of Philadelphia's back alleys. The film made extensive use of improvisation, and legendary acting teachers Sanford Meisner and William Hickey appear in cameos as mob bosses. The raw sensibility of May's direction and the improvised performances make the film more about male friendship and the psychology of American masculinity than a traditional gangster picture. May clashed with studio executives over the final edit. It was not until a decade after its initial release that audiences were able to view May's preferred version.

Ishtar (1987) was the final film May directed. Although the film has gained a cult following for its Orwellian vision, critics and audiences at the time rejected it. Dustin Hoffman and Warren Beatty (who also served as producer) play untalented musical lounge performers who book an engagement in the fictional nation of Ishtar. There they become entangled in a political revolution when the CIA enlists them to interfere with a plot to overthrow Ishtar's government.

As an actress, May also appeared in *Enter Laughing* (Carl Reiner, 1967); *Luv* (Clive Donner, 1967); *In the Spirit* (Sandra Seacat, 1990), co-written by Berlin; and *Small Time Crooks* (Woody Allen, 2000).

Beginning with the 1969 Drama Desk Award for Most Promising Playwright (for *Adaptation*), May has also enjoyed success as a writer. For the screen, she co-wrote *Heaven Can Wait* with Warren Beatty (Beatty and Buck Henry, 1978). She also contributed to the scripts of *Such Good Friends* (Otto Preminger, 1971), *Reds* (Warren Beatty, 1981), *Tootsie* (Sydney Pollack, 1982), and *Labyrinth* (Jim Henson, 1986). She reunited with Nichols by writing screenplays for *The Birdcage* (1996) and *Primary Colors* (1998), both of which he directed. May was nominated for an Academy Award for her work on *Heaven Can Wait* and *Primary Colors*, for which she won a British Academy of Film and Television Award. She has been nominated for three Writer's Guild of America awards, and has won one, for *Heaven Can Wait*.

Selected Filmography

Down to Earth (2001); *Primary Colors* (1998); *The Birdcage* (1996); *Ishtar* (1987); *Labyrinth* (1986); *Tootsie* (1982); *Reds* (1981); *Heaven Can Wait* (1978); *Mikey and Nicky* (1976); *Such Good Friends* (1971); *A New Leaf* (1971); *Bach to Bach* (1967)

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—Kyle Stevens

MCDANIEL, HATTIE. Hattie McDaniel—singer; songwriter; radio, stage, and film actress—is best known for her role as “Mammy” in the David O. Selznick movie *Gone with the Wind* (1939). This role earned her the honor of being the first African American to be nominated for an Academy Award; when she won the Oscar for Best Supporting Actress, she became the first African American to win an Academy Award. She was also the first African American woman to sing on radio and the first African American Academy Award winner to appear on a U.S. stamp. McDaniel had a prolific career in film. She appeared in well over 100 productions, usually as a domestic, and was befriended by some of the leading stars of her day, including Clark Gable, who routinely attended parties at McDaniel’s home and who worked with her on several films (Watts, 2007). Believing she deserved to be buried in Hollywood Cemetery, she requested this honor in her will; when she died in 1952, the owner of the cemetery refused McDaniel’s request, pointing out that African Americans were not allowed to be buried there.

Hattie McDaniel was born on June 10, 1895, in Wichita, Kansas, to Civil War veteran Henry McDaniel and Susan Holbert, a former slave (Jackson, 1993). She was the youngest of 13 children. The McDaniel family moved to Colorado in 1900, and Hattie was raised in Denver. She and her brothers Sam and Chris eventually began touring with their father’s Henry McDaniel Minstrel Show. In 1910, she won an award for reciting a poem at a Women’s Christian Temperance Union event, and this contributed to her desire to perform. In 1920, she joined a popular all-black band called George Morrison’s Jazz Orchestra and toured with them through 1925. Her radio career began on KOA radio station in Denver. She appeared in a touring company of “Showboat” as the character “Queenie” from 1929 to 1930. McDaniel joined her brother Sam, who had become a film actor, and sisters Etta and Orlena in Los Angeles in 1931. She teamed with Sam on KNX radio, playing the bossy maid “Hi-Hat Hattie” on *The Optimistic Do-Nut Hour*.

McDaniel secured her first film role in *The Golden West* (1932); she followed this picture with appearances in *Love Bound*, *Impatient Maid*, and *Are You Listening?*, all

of which were released in 1932. She joined the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) in 1934, and in 1935 the Fox Film Corporation offered her a contract to appear in *The Little Colonel* with Shirley Temple and Bill “Bojangles” Robinson. Amazingly, she appeared in 70 films in the 1930s alone. She was routinely cast as a maid, nanny, cook, or servant in these films (Bogle, 1994). Although she would win an Oscar for her role in *Gone with the Wind*, McDaniel, along with the other African American actors who appeared in the picture, was barred from the film’s 1939 Atlanta, Georgia, premiere. Protests by David O. Selznick and Clarke Gable fell on deaf ears. Even after she took home the Academy Award in 1940, she continued to be cast as a domestic throughout her career.



Hattie McDaniel plays a tune as she portrays the title role of *Beulah* in the CBS Radio Network’s comedy series in New York City, 1951. (AP/Wide World Photos)

McDaniel was active in film and then in television throughout the 1940s. During this period in her career, she co-starred in pictures such as *In This Our Life* (1942), with Bette Davis, and *Since You Went Away* (1944). Her last film appearances were in *Mickey* and *Family Honeymoon*, both of which were released in 1949. She starred in *The Beulah Show* on radio in 1947; the show was later adapted for TV and shown on ABC during 1950s. McDaniel was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1951, having appeared in only a few episodes of the television version of *The Beulah Show*. She died from the disease on October 26, 1952, in Woodland Hills, California.

One of the most important contributors to the development of American radio and film, McDaniel was a trailblazer, opening the way for future African American actresses (Jackson, 1993). She has two stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, one for her contributions to film and another for her accomplishments in radio.

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—Hettie Williams

MÉLIÈS, GEORGES. Marie-Georges-Jean Méliès (December 8, 1861–January 21, 1938) was a crucial figure in the development of motion pictures. Méliès, the youngest son of a wealthy French family, was a man of startling artistic virtuosity who introduced seminal changes to early filmmaking. Charlie Chaplin appropriately called him “the alchemist of light.”

A talented man with a classical education, Méliès began his career drawing caricatures under the anagrammatic pseudonym “Geo Smile” for the satirical journal *La Griffè*. Attracted by the subversive dream-world of the stage, he bought the Théâtre Robert-Houdin in 1888, where he worked as director, inventor, performer, producer, conjurer, and designer until 1895, establishing himself as a successful and respected personality in the Parisian entertainment world. Enchanted by the Lumière brothers’ show at the Grand Café in 1895, Méliès wanted to purchase a cinematograph but Antoine Lumière refused to sell him one. A year later, Méliès constructed his own camera modeled after R. W. Paul’s cinematic device, built the first European glass-structure film studio, and began the production of his own films.

Méliès understood that a movie is more than a simple process of reality recording. Unlike the Lumière brothers, who saw film as no more than a scientific curiosity employed in the mimesis of the world, Méliès recognized the artistic, entertaining, and narrative potential of movies. He combined theatrical skills and filmmaking, turning from being a conjuror of the stage into a magician of the screen. Méliès realized that film as new technology was to make magic shows available for large audiences in a place that combined the technical potential of the film medium with the artistic values of the theater: the film theater.

He created the basic grammar of special effects and trick pictures in movies. Méliès used the reversal of time, the split screen, the overlapping process, the double and multiple exposure, time-lapse, and the dissolve process; he was the first to shoot the stop trick, afterwards used in *Disappearance of a Lady* (1896). The stop trick and the time-lapse were techniques that later would create the need for professional film cutters. Long before Technicolor’s three-color pellicle format, Méliès had his own color films, which were manufactured by 21 women employed at a special studio to hand-tint his films individually, frame by frame.

Méliès was, at the turn of the twentieth century, the most inventive filmmaker in the world. Today he can be considered the first cinematic auteur. His early films were groundbreaking artifacts that have influenced mainstream and avant-garde filmmakers alike. The 14-minute epic *A Trip to the Moon* (1902) was the first movie in film history to employ animation; together with *Impossible Voyage* (1904) it was the precursor of science fiction and fantasy films. *The Devil’s Manor* (1896) is the prototype of thriller

and horror films, while the reconstructed reality of the *Dreyfus Affair* (1899) posits Méliès as the pioneer of the docudrama.

The films of Méliès enjoyed enormous worldwide popularity and began to be plagiarized. In 1903, he decided to fight his film imitators in America—where copies of *A Voyage to the Moon* were widely pirated—by opening his STAR-FILM company in New York to rent his films. This investment failed because his small company was incapable of fighting the intensifying commercialism of the rapidly growing film industry. Despite his active involvement in early cinema, Méliès finally went bankrupt.

Fewer than 140 of his 520 films survive. A considerable number of valuable movies were melted down during World War I in order to produce a chemical for the manufacturing of boot heels needed by the French army; in addition, in a moment of financial and emotional crisis, Méliès destroyed a batch of his film negatives and sold his remaining stock of prints by the kilogram to a second-hand film dealer in 1923.

In 1931, Méliès was awarded the Legion of Honor by the French Government. Twenty-two years later, Georges Franju produced, with the assistance of the Méliès family, a stylish bio-documentary entitled *Le Grande Méliès* in which he pays tribute to the first wizard of cinema, who created a coherent artistic world of blissful escapism in films.

See also: Silent Era, The

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—Réka M. Cristian

MICHEAUX, OSCAR. Novelist, producer, director, and actor, Oscar Micheaux was the first African American to produce a feature-length film (1919) and a sound feature-length film (1920). He was also one of the first African Americans to write a best-selling novel—*The Case of Mrs. Wingate* (1943), which sold 55,000 copies. Micheaux, active primarily from 1919 to 1948, participated in more than 40 film productions as a writer, director, producer, or actor. Upon his death on March 25, 1951, in Charlotte, North Carolina, it was noted that of the 82 all-black films made to date, Micheaux was responsible for creating more than half of them. Having served as a Pullman porter and a homesteader in the American West, he was also a pioneering black filmmaker during the Harlem Renaissance era (1919–1934). His films were often classified as “race films” because he challenged the stereotypical depictions of

African Americans presented in the popular pictures of the day while maintaining a black visual iconography and giving expression to a more positive representation of “blackness” (Bowser, Gaines, and Musser, 2001).

Micheaux was born January 2, 1884, in Metropolis, Illinois, one of 13 children. His parents were former slaves. He was raised in Great Bend, Kansas. Leaving home at age 17, he made his way to Chicago, where he became a Pullman rail car porter. Influenced by the self-help philosophy of Booker T. Washington, he moved West with thousands of other African Americans at the end of the nineteenth century. He became a homesteader, eventually acquiring a 160-acre plot of land in Gregory County, South Dakota, in 1905 (McGilligan, 2008).

Micheaux published his first novel in 1913. Titled *The Conquest: The Story of a Negro Pioneer*, it was based on his experience as a homesteader. This book became the basis of a later cinematic work. Micheaux often wrote his life story into the narrative structure of his films, thereby documenting the historical experience of African Americans through personal biography (Bowser, Spencer, 2000). In 1915, he lost his farm due to financial hardship; he relocated to Sioux City, Iowa, where he established the Western Book Supply Company. He continued to write, self-publishing and selling his novels door-to-door. Micheaux wrote the novels *The Forged Note* in 1915 and *The Homesteader* in 1917. He made Western Book Supply viable by selling stock in the company to businessmen and farmers in Sioux City. After rejecting an offer from African American filmmakers George and Noble Johnson—owners of the Los Angeles-based Lincoln Motion Picture Company—to make *The Homesteader* into a film, Micheaux transformed his Western Book Supply Company into the Micheaux Film and Book Company. Through his fund-raising efforts, he secured enough capital to develop *The Homesteader* himself. The film premiered February 20, 1919; it was the first feature-length picture developed by an African American (Cripps, 1977).

Micheaux is recognized as an important personality in American filmmaking for several reasons. His films were both controversial and progressive for the times during which they were produced. The African American newspaper *The Chicago Defender* heralded the coming of a “new epoch” in black culture with the premiere of *The Homesteader* in 1919. Micheaux directly challenged prevailing racial attitudes with his productions. His picture *Within Our Gates*, released in 1920, was a direct challenge to the romanticized depiction of the Ku Klux Klan presented in D. W. Griffith’s 1915 film *The Birth of a Nation*. Griffith’s film is often lauded as a cinematic masterpiece, but it aroused a great deal of criticism from the African American community due to its blatant stereotypes of blacks. Micheaux’s response was an attempt to showcase a more realistic depiction of white supremacy and the brutality leveled at African Americans in the South. Micheaux also sought to highlight controversial racial issues in *Body and Soul*, released in 1924. The story of *Body and Soul* concerned a corrupt minister, played by Paul Robeson (1898–1976), an African American performer who was introduced to movie audiences in this film, who beats and rapes a black woman. Micheaux’s 1931 picture *The Exile* was the first sound feature-length film created by an African American.

Oscar Micheaux produced and directed 44 movies and wrote a total of seven novels including *The Winds from Nowhere* (1941), *The Case of Mrs. Wingate* (1943), *The Story*

of *Dorothy Stanfield* (1946), and *Masquerade, a Historical Novel* (1947). He has been recognized by both the Producers Guild of America, which honored his work by creating the Oscar Micheaux Award, and the Directors Guild of America, which acknowledged his work by creating the Golden Jubilee Special Award in 1986. Micheaux is recognized by many as one of the most influential African Americans in American history. As a writer, director, and producer of American films, he embodied the self-help ethic central to the development of the black experience in America.

Selected Filmography

The Betrayal (1948); *The Notorious Elinor Lee* (1940); *God's Step Children* (1938); *Swing!* (1938); *Underworld* (1937/1); *Murder in Harlem* (1935); *Harlem after Midnight* (1934); *The Exile* (1931); *Darktown Revue* (1931); *Wages of Sin* (1929); *The Millionaire* (1927); *The Spider's Web* (1927); *The Broken Violin* (1927); *The House behind the Cedars* (1927); *Body and Soul* (1925); *The Gunsaulus Mystery* (1921); *The Symbol of the Unconquered* (1920); *The Brute* (1920); *Within Our Gates* (1920); *The Homesteader* (1919)

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—Hettie Williams

MILLER, ARTHUR. Arthur Miller is primarily remembered for writing plays that deal with tortured individuals facing what might be understood as existential injustice, but early in his career he was connected with the film industry. That connection grew as his career progressed, partially because his plays were turned into films and partially because he married movie star Marilyn Monroe. Although he eventually saw his screenplays produced for television and the big screen, he never committed himself fully to the cinematic community.

Arthur Miller was born on October 17, 1915, in New York City. He began making a name for himself as a playwright while attending college in Michigan in the 1930s, winning the Avery Hopwood Award twice and the Theatre Guild National Award. After college, he returned to New York and took a job at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. In



Arthur Miller, along with William Inge and Tennessee Williams, was an influential voice in the American theater in the 1950s. His best works are characterized by concerns for societal problems and a passion for social liberation. (Library of Congress)

his spare time, he wrote radio scripts for *The Dupont Cavalcade of America*, a weekly serial broadcast on NBC, among other programs. In 1944, he began to expand his horizons, signing a contract to do research for the script of *The Story of G.I. Joe* (1945), based on the war correspondence of Ernie Pyle. Although he was not credited for his work on the film script, he did turn his research into a book, *Situation Normal* (1944). The following year he published the novel *Focus*, which was ultimately adapted for the screen in 2001; he also found success on the stage with the plays *All My Sons* (1947) and *Death of a Salesman* (1949), both of which were adapted as films, the first in 1948 and the second in 1951.

Late in the 1940s, Miller completed a screenplay that bore the title *The Hook*. The script was rejected by studio executives, even though Miller's friend, the influential Elia Kazan, who had directed *All My Sons* and *Salesman* on stage, pushed to have it made. The script was thought

too "leftist" for the Cold War times—too "communist"—as it suggested that America's workers were being exploited by their capitalist employers. Interestingly, even though Kazan had pushed to have Miller's screenplay made into a movie, he went on to testified before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), informing on "communist colleagues" and damaging his friendship with Miller. Miller's plays continued to be adapted for television throughout the 1950s. Significantly, one of them, *The Crucible* (1953), turned the Salem witch trials of the 1690s into an allegory of the HUAC hearings.

Cognizant that he could be caught up in the political controversies of the day, and seeking to avoid charges that his work was merely a veiled attempt to indict figures such as Joseph McCarthy in the court of public opinion, Miller had sought to make *The Crucible* as historically accurate as possible. Nevertheless, he developed a

reputation as a political dissident, and HUAC influence prevented him from making a movie about juvenile delinquency in 1955. The following year, shortly after he married Monroe, he was called to testify before HUAC and was convicted of contempt of Congress for refusing to cooperate; the conviction was ultimately overturned on appeal. Monroe stood by Miller during his trouble with HUAC, even though she had been warned by Hollywood insiders that she should distance herself from her husband. Miller also stood by Monroe, even as her insecurities led her to suffer mood swings, to abuse drugs and alcohol, and to become increasingly unhappy. Attempting to lift her spirits, Miller adapted his story “The Misfits” into a screenplay and a star vehicle for Monroe; by the time *The Misfits* arrived in theaters, however, Miller and Monroe had divorced. He married the Hollywood photographer Inge Morath in 1962, six months before Monroe died of a drug overdose.

After his marriage to Monroe ended, Miller largely devoted himself to writing for the theater. He did remain tangentially connected to the film industry, however. For example, his play *After the Fall* (1964)—a statement about both HUAC and his first two wives—was adapted for the screen in 1964. He also wrote screenplays for television projects in the 1970s and 1980s—*Fame* (1978), about a playwright’s overnight success, and *Playing for Time* (1980), an adaptation of Fania Fenelon’s Holocaust memoirs—and the screenplay for the movie *Everybody Wins* (1984), a hard-boiled detective film about corruption in a Connecticut town. He also adapted *The Crucible* for the 1995 film version of the play. Yet Miller remained first and foremost a playwright—certainly one of America’s greatest. He died on February 10, 2005, a respected man of letters.

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—Albert Rolls

MONROE, MARILYN. Marilyn Monroe became a global sex symbol as a result of playing coquettish blondes in mid-1950s Hollywood movies. Born Norma Jean Mortenson on June 1, 1926, she was baptized Norma Jean Baker, the surname of her mother’s ex-husband. After her mother was committed to a mental institution, Monroe lived in a series of foster homes. The last of these was run by family friends Grace and Erwin Goddard, with whom Monroe lived until she was 15. Facing reassignment to another foster home when the Goddards decided to relocate to a different area, the teenage Monroe married James Dougherty, a 21-year-old neighbor, to avoid her fate. The marriage disintegrated after Dougherty joined the Merchant Marines in 1944, and Monroe took a job at airplane factory. While working at the factory, she was discovered by photographer David Conover; she eventually became a model and came to the attention of Hollywood studio executives.



Movie legend Marilyn Monroe, appearing with the USO Camp Show “Anything Goes,” poses for photos after a performance at the Third U.S. Infantry Division area in Korea on February 17, 1954. (National Archives and Records Administration)

Near the end of the summer of 1946, Monroe signed a contract with Twentieth Century-Fox. Shortly afterwards, Norma Jean Baker bleached her hair blonde and changed her name to Marilyn Monroe. For the next few years, she played a series of small parts in movies such as *The Shocking Miss Pilgrim* (1947), *Love Happy* (1949), and *A Ticket to Tomahawk* (1950). Larger parts in *The Asphalt Jungle* (1950) and *All about Eve* (1950) earned her fans and the attention of critics; a number of more visible roles followed, including the lead in *Don't Bother to Knock* (1952). Her performance in *Niagara* (1953), as a wife plotting to kill her husband, propelled her to stardom and began to establish her as a major sex symbol of the silver screen. Monroe became Hollywood's preeminent “Blond Bombshell” after *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* and *How to Marry a Millionaire* were released in 1953.

Monroe married New York Yankee superstar Joe DiMaggio at the beginning of 1954; the marriage did not last, however, largely because of Monroe's sex-symbol status and DiMaggio's insecurity. Monroe's career had taken off, and even a stilted performance in *River of No Return* (1954) and the negative box-office figures of *There's No Business Like Show Business* (1954) could not derail it. Repeatedly cast as the sexy, dimwitted blond, however—a type she once again portrayed in 1955's *The Seven Year Itch*—Monroe became disheartened. In an effort to escape that image and become a serious screen

performer, she travelled to New York City and studied at Lee Strasberg's Actors Studio. While in New York, she met playwright Arthur Miller, whom she married in 1956. That same year she returned to Hollywood and starred in *Bus Stop* (1956), a film partially financed by her own production company, Marilyn Monroe Productions. Her character in that film, Cherrie, was the first well-rounded filmic figure that she had portrayed; critics and moviegoers alike appreciated the change in her screen persona.

Bus Stop was followed by *The Prince and the Showgirl* (1957), the only movie entirely produced by Marilyn Monroe Productions; it co-starred Laurence Olivier, who also directed. Monroe again played a showgirl, Elsie Marina, but an intelligent one who controls much of the film's action. Although the picture failed at the box office, Monroe's performance earned her a David Di Donatello Award, the Italian Academy Award. In 1959, Monroe appeared as Sugar Kane Kowalczyk in *Some Like It Hot*. Playing opposite Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon, Monroe starred as a singer in an all-girl band infiltrated by two men in drag, who are hiding from the mob after witnessing the St Valentine's Day Massacre. It was the most successful film of her career and won her a Golden Globe.

Her next film, *Let's Make Love* (1960), based on a terrible script that Monroe was forced to accept by Fox, was a flop. Worse, her life seemed to be unraveling; she had been using prescription drugs to escape her insecurities for years but was now suicidal. Miller had attempted to help by adapting his story "The Misfits" into a screenplay for her, but when *The Misfits* (1961) appeared, their marriage was over. She did not live to finish her next film, *Something's Got to Give* (1962). Monroe was found dead on August 5, 1962, having overdosed on barbiturates.

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—Albert Rolls

MOORE, MICHAEL. A talented yet controversial figure, Michael Moore uses his films to promote his worldview and challenge the status quo. A self-described populist, Moore has long been interested in social activism and fights fervently for his causes.

Born April 23, 1954, in Flint, Michigan, where his father worked for General Motors, Moore was raised in nearby Davison. Growing up, Moore was a highly motivated student, winning a library award for reading more books than any other seven-year-old. Raised in a blue-collar Catholic family, his first foray into politics came in 1972, when he won a seat on the local school board. Following high school, Moore started an area hotline for people struggling with issues related to unwanted pregnancies, drug addiction, and suicidal thoughts; he also began publishing *Free to Be*, a community newspaper. After dropping out of the University of Michigan, Moore



Michael Moore, American filmmaker and liberal political activist (1954–). (Shutterstock)

started *The Flint Voice*—which became *The Michigan Voice* in 1982—as a liberal alternative to the conservative *Flint Journal*. A National Public Radio commentator by the time he was 31, Moore became editor of the progressive magazine *Mother Jones* in 1986; he was fired a short time after taking the position. While details of his dismissal are unclear, Moore received a \$58,000 wrongful dismissal settlement, although *Mother Jones* never publicly admitted any wrongdoing. Moore used the settlement monies to fund his first full-length documentary, *Roger & Me* (1989).

Roger & Me details Moore's failed attempts to interview Roger Smith, then CEO of General Motors, about the company's closure of its plant in Flint. Moore depicted company officials as hardhearted bureaucrats who cared nothing about their employees or about the community; he even went so far as to blame General Motors for the economic woes plaguing his hometown. Holding the film's premiere at

Flint's Rainbow Cinemas, he donated a large portion of the proceeds to the community. In 1994, Moore created *TV Nation*, a television program devoted to political satire. The program fed his next film, *Canadian Bacon* (1995), a narrative comedy in which the President (Alan Alda) attempts to cast Canada as an American enemy. The film did not do well in the United States, but was well received in Canada.

Moore's next documentary, *Bowling for Columbine* (2002), tackled gun control. Moore argued for stricter regulations while criticizing the National Rifle Association, President George W. Bush, and the media for creating a culture of violence through fomenting fear. The film became the top-grossing documentary of all time, and won the 2003 Best Documentary Oscar. During his acceptance speech, Moore

openly criticized President Bush; his comments elicited mixed reactions from audience members.

His vehement disapproval of Bush administration policies led him to make *Fahrenheit 9/11* (2004). While critical of Bush's policies in general, the film focused on the administration's decision to invade Iraq in 2003. Despite winning the top prize at the Cannes Film Festival, Disney-owned Miramax, Moore's distributor, dropped the project before the film was released in the United States. Miramax executives cited what they said was Moore's politically motivated decision to release the film in the midst of the 2004 presidential campaign, claiming that he was attempting to influence the election. Interestingly, Moore accused Miramax of playing politics, claiming that studio heads had actually been pressured by Florida Governor Jeb Bush, the president's brother. Ironically, the controversy only increased interest in the film, which ended up grossing \$222 million worldwide, surpassing *Bowling for Columbine* as the all-time highest-grossing documentary.

Moore continued to push for social reform in the projects that followed *Bowling for Columbine*. In *Sicko* (2007), for instance, he examined what he believes is the critical state of the American health care industry, suggesting that the United States desperately needs some form of universal health care; and in *Capitalism: A Love Story* (2009), he explored the faltering economy that accompanied the 2008 election.

Moore's commercial success can be attributed to his unique cinematic style. Relentlessly making his case—his critics, and even his supporters, point out that his films are hardly representative of objective documentary filmmaking—Moore manages to inject his films with a great deal of humour. His goal, it seems, is not to present a balanced discussion of an issue, but rather to provoke an emotional response from viewers in order to convince them of his side of the argument.

Although Moore has proven to be a polarizing figure, he has nevertheless become the most successful documentary filmmaker in cinematic history. Undaunted by his critics, Moore continues to champion his causes and, in the process, to produce entertaining and controversial films.

Selected Filmography

Capitalism: A Love Story (2009); *Slacker Uprising* (2007); *Fahrenheit 9/11* (2004); *Bowling for Columbine* (2002); *The Big One* (1997); *Canadian Bacon* (1995); *Roger & Me* (1989)

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—Sean Graham

MULVEY, LAURA. Laura Mulvey is a filmmaker, film historian, and theorist best known for her contributions to feminist film theory.

Mulvey was born August 15, 1941 in Oxford, UK. From 1960 to 1963, she attended St. Hilda's College, University of Oxford, receiving an honors bachelor's degree in history. After writing a number of essays on psychoanalysis and film theory, as well as venturing into filmmaking, in 1975 she published "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" in *Screen* magazine.

Influenced by theorists such as Christian Metz, who used psychoanalytic theory to establish a relationship between the viewer and the camera (usually referred to as "Apparatus Theory"), the essay attempted to explain how women are seen through the lens, and, by extension, how men and women are conditioned to view women. According to Mulvey, the subjectivity of cinema is almost invariably male. Therefore, cinema is a place where women are denied independence of thought and motion. Women become a spectacle whose purpose is almost exclusively defined in sexual terms. Female sexuality is given only a passive space in cinema, where women are characterized as preferring to be looked at than to look themselves. It is from this essay that the concept of the domineering "male gaze" became widely introduced into film and media studies.

Mulvey applies her theory of male-dominated cinematic scopophilia to textual analysis. Discussing Joseph von Sternberg's relationship with Marlene Dietrich, Mulvey states that his films are "one-dimensional" in their fetishizing of Dietrich's form. This erotic worship allows the male viewer a pure appreciation of sexual difference without the castration anxiety that Freud explored. Alternatively, Alfred Hitchcock provided a "more complex" scopophilia, both fetishizing the female form in a manner similar to Sternberg's and reducing it through either voyeurism or sadism. In the case of both directors, female stars were invariably weakened through the cinematic process.

Subsequent pieces clarified her position on the very polemical essay. She expanded her theoretical viewer to include multiple perspectives and even, functioning as more of a film historian than theorist, uncover areas of more complex female spectatorship. Avant-garde works, such as *Meshes of the Afternoon* by Maya Deren, and certain more mainstream works, such as Douglas Sirk's melodramas and the films of Rudolph Valentino, provided at least some space for women viewers.

Mulvey also directed, from 1974 to 1983, six films with her partner Peter Wollen, also a film theorist. The films were intended to apply their theoretical explorations to film production. They were known for confronting the concept of male spectatorship and denying traditional cinematic pleasures and viewer passivity.

Riddles of the Sphinx (1977) consists of a 13 360-degree shots of different environments, using cinema's ability to create a "psychic" space to find new spaces for women. *Amy!* (1980) examines British aviatrix Amy Johnson using a jarring, cinematic collage approach. It has been called an "antidocumentary." *Crystal Gazing* (1982) is known as Wollen and Mulvey's most conventional film, about Thatcherite Britain's social conservatism and economic decline.

Mulvey has since expanded into a number of new theoretical and disciplinary arenas. In 1991, she returned to filmmaking with *Disgraced Monuments*, about the fate

of communist imagery after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Her contribution to the British Film Institute's Film Classics series of short monographs was on *Citizen Kane*. Her writing was heavily historical, not theoretical, in its intent to use the film as a barometer of American political thinking on the verge of WWII. The Criterion DVD release of Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom* (1960) included Mulvey reading a short essay of appreciation for the film.

In 2006, Mulvey published a book of essays, *Death Twenty-Four Times a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image*. She is currently Professor of Film and Media Studies at Birkbeck College, University of London.

See also: Feminist Film Criticism; Male Gaze, The

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—Alan C. Abbott

MURNAU, F. W. Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau was a prominent German film director of the 1920s. During a brief career spanning only 12 years, Murnau was credited with pioneering many of the techniques still used in film today.

Murnau was born Friedrich Wilhelm Plumpe on December 28, 1888, in Bielefeld, Westphalia, to a family of Swedish ancestry. His education included time spent at universities in Heidelberg and Berlin, where he studied art history, literature, and philosophy. It is during this period of his life that he came under the influence of director Max Reinhardt (*Deutsches Theatre*) and decided to pursue a career in acting. A subsequent rift between father and son caused by this decision resulted in Friedrich changing his name to Murnau (after a Bavarian town) and the father cutting the son off financially. It was only through the help of his grandfather that Plumpe (now Murnau) was able to complete his education (Wakeman, 1987). With the outbreak of World War I, Murnau served first in the infantry on the Russian front and later in the air corps as a pilot. Forced to land in Switzerland during a heavy fog, he was interned there for the remainder of the conflict.

Murnau's initial foray into film occurred during his Swiss internment, where he worked on propaganda films for the German embassy. At the end of the conflict he returned to Berlin and formed a film company with actor Conrad Veidt (Murnau Veidt Filmgesellschaft). Murnau's directorial debut came in the 1919 production of



Onboard the *Demeter*, the vampire Count Orlok, played by German actor Max Schreck (1879–1936), emerges from one of his coffins before they can be destroyed by the ship’s first mate, played by Wolfgang Heinz, in a scene from F. W. Murnau’s expressionist horror film *Nosferatu, Eine Symphonie Des Grauens*, 1921. The film is based on Bram Stoker’s novel *Dracula* and was released in 1922. (Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

Der Knabe in Blau (*The Blue Boy*). This interpretation of a Gothic melodrama introduced techniques such as the inventive use of light and space and the use of the camera to interpret character emotions that would reappear over the course of his career (Mauro, 1997).

Of the 21 films directed by Murnau, the most influential was *Nosferatu* (1922). During an age when most films were still done on soundstages, Murnau deliberately chose to shoot on location in order to achieve a greater sense of realism. To further enhance the film’s supernatural mood, he drew upon expressionist film techniques such as the use of shadows and light as well as stop-action and accelerated motion. *Nosferatu* is considered one of the classic works of the German Expressionist film genre and the benchmark by which all subsequent vampire films are measured.

From 1924 to 1926, Murnau directed three films for UFA Studios: *Der letzte Mann* (*The Last Laugh*), *Tartuffe* (1926), and *Faust* (1926). The release of these films continued not only to solidify his reputation as a director in Germany, but also to earn him international recognition. A combination of factors, including problems in his personal life and the financial failure of *Faust*, led him to accept an offer from William Fox of Fox Studios to move to Hollywood, in 1926 (Wakeman; and Tibbetts, 2002).

Murnau was given full control as a director; he was also allowed to bring over his film crew. In his first picture for Fox, *Sunrise* (1927), Murnau employed many of the techniques he had perfected in his German films, with the result being a very “German” English-language film (it also helped that the film was based on German author Herman Sudermann’s *Die Reise nach Tilsit*). Critically successful, *Sunrise* garnered three Academy Awards, including Best Actress for Janet Gaynor. Unfortunately for Murnau, the picture was a box-office flop, which resulted in his losing control over his subsequent films with Fox (*Four Devils* and *City Girl*). Disheartened and disenchanted with Hollywood and the studio system, Murnau broke his contract with Fox in 1929 and became an independent director.

By this time Murnau was financially well off (he now owned a farm in Oregon and a luxury yacht) and could afford to embark on a documentary project with fellow filmmaker Robert Flaherty. *Tabu* (1931) was filmed on location in Tahiti, focusing on the lives of Polynesian pearl divers. In this, his last film, Murnau reflects and draws upon all his previous techniques to create what Gary Lewis called the “metaphysical and tragic themes which always interested him” (Lewis, 1966)—in essence, German Expressionism fused with an idyllic South Pacific to create the ultimate escape from reality.

The film opened on March 18, 1931, although Murnau did not live to celebrate the moment. One week earlier, on March 11, he was killed in a tragic car accident near Santa Barbara, California. Influential beyond the grave, Murnau’s legacy lived on in future generations of filmmakers—most notably Orson Welles and Alfred Hitchcock—as well as in the horror and film noir genres.

Selected Filmography

Tabu: A Story of the South Seas (1931); *City Girl* (1930); *4 Devils* (1928); *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* (1927); *Faust* (1926); *Tartuffe* (1925); *The Last Laugh* (1924); *The Phantom* (1922); *Nosferatu, eine Symphonie des Grauens* (1922); *The Haunted Castle* (1921); *Desire* (1921); *The Dark Road* (1921); *Abend—Nacht—Morgen* (1920); *The Two-Faced Man* (1920); *Der Bucklige und die Tänzerin* (1920); *Satanas* (1920); *Emerald of Death* (1919)

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—Charles Johnson

MUYBRIDGE, EADWEARD. Edward James Muggeridge, later known to the world as Eadweard Muybridge, was born in Kingston-upon-Thames, England, on April 9, 1830. He had a flamboyantly odd personality and was known as an eccentric

photographer, whose interest in biomechanics set the stage for the invention of the motion pictures.

Muybridge moved in his youth to the United States and became, after a New York commercial career in book binding and selling, a professional photographer. Known also by the artistic name of "Helios," he specialized in landscape views of the American West after he moved to California in 1855. His outstanding stereoscopic pictures and stunning wet collodion shots of Yosemite Valley (1867, 1872) established his reputation as the top photographer of the West Coast. As official photographer for the government departments, he recorded pictures of Alaska (1868), of the Pacific Railroad, of armed conflicts between the United States Army and the Modoc Indians, and created uniquely detailed pictorial information in the panoramic pictures of San Francisco before the 1906 earthquake. After the tragic events in his personal life, when Muybridge was tried for murdering his wife's lover and then acquitted on the paradoxical grounds of justifiable deeds, he went into a self-imposed working exile and joined an expedition to Central America, which he richly documented in photos. After he returned, he dedicated his work almost entirely to high-speed photography and to the studies of motion.

In 1872, Muybridge was commissioned by the railroad baron Leland Stanford to settle an incise dispute among racing men about the position of hooves during a horse's gallop. The scheme, constructed at Palo Alto, California, was designed to investigate the phases of rapid equine locomotion. Muybridge first used 12 cameras in a row along a track. He attached a high-speed shutter mechanism to each camera and used a long trip wire that he stretched across the track so Leland's trotting racehorse could trigger each shutter as it went past the cameras. These caught each phase of the movement in a series of 12 photographs. This experiment proved that the horse in swift movement lifted all four feet off the ground simultaneously at a given point during the gallop. For a more precise recording of movement, Muybridge used 24 cameras, as well as lateral cameras with oblique views and more sophisticated shutter-release methods that led to substantial motion studies on animals and even people. The automated shutters Muybridge used in high-speed photography were later adopted for the first movie cameras.

Muybridge invented the zoopraxiscope, also known as zoopraxinoscope or zoogyroscope, which was the projection version of the earlier spinning picture disk, the phenakitoskope. The zoopraxiscope was the forerunner of the movie projector and the first machine to project sequential images of animals, birds, and humans from a dinner-plate-sized rotating glass disk, which produced the illusion of animation by concatenating images into a primitive version of moving images. The zoopraxiscope was the most sophisticated projector of successive photographs at the time and preceded Étienne Jules Marey's chronophotographic gun or the shotgun camera and Thomas Edison's and William Kennedy Laurie Dickson's Kinetoscope.

By 1887, Muybridge's studies incited broad scientific interest, and in the same year he published an 11-volume summary of his experiments at the University of Pennsylvania entitled *Animal Locomotion: An Electro-Photographic Investigation of Consecutive Phases of Animal Movements*. This was the most comprehensive and richly illustrated study on

movement and is used even today as a primary work of reference. Muybridge lectured widely in America and Europe and used the zoopraxiscope for projections during his presentations. Additionally, he published other notable “dictionaries” of animal and human motion: *Descriptive Zoopraxography or the Science of Animal Locomotion Made Popular* (1893), *Animals in Motion, an Electro-Photographic Investigation of Consecutive Phases of Animal Progressive Movements* (1899), and *The Human Figure in Motion: An Electrophotographic Investigation of Consecutive Phases of Muscular Actions* (1901).

The self-proclaimed artist-photographer retired to his birthplace and died on May 8, 1904. The complete collection of his photographic plates and lantern slides, his zoopraxiscope and other miscellaneous materials, preserved in London’s South Kensington Museum, document the innovative spirit of the man who believed in the technological potential of the medium and also in the power of photography as an art form.

See also: Silent Era, The

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—Réka M. Cristian

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MOVIES IN AMERICAN HISTORY

AN ENCYCLOPEDIA
Volume 3

Philip C. DiMare, Editor



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NEWMAN, PAUL. Rejected from Naval pilot training during World War II because of his color-blindness, Paul Newman, born January 26, 1925, instead served as a radioman and gunner in the Pacific theater before returning to school in Ohio. He soon relocated to the northeast, studying drama at Yale and under Lee Strasberg at the Actors Studio. He acted on Broadway—including the original Broadway production of *Sweet Bird of Youth*, which he would return to for the film version—before gravitating to Hollywood. He was never proud of his first film role, as Basil, a Greek artist commissioned to cast the Holy Grail in silver in *The Silver Chalice* (1952), and when it aired on television in 1966—at a point when the movie had no life except to capitalize on his fame—he took out an advertisement apologizing for it. He received considerably more acclaim for *Somebody Up There Likes Me* (1956), in which he took over the role of middleweight boxer Rocky Graziano after the death of intended star James Dean. He had already substituted for Dean in a live color television broadcast of *Our Town*, with Eva Marie Saint and Frank Sinatra.

Roles came his way quickly, including *The Long Hot Summer* (1958), based on short stories by William Faulkner. The movie co-starred Joanne Woodward, who had previously understudied in a Broadway production of *Picnic* that Newman starred in. The two fell in love and were married after the film, not long after his divorce from his first wife, Jackie Witte (with whom he had three children, Scott, Susan, and Stephanie). Joanne would costar with Newman in nine more movies: *Rally Round the Flag, Boys!* (1958), *From the Terrace* (1960), *Paris Blues* (1961), *A New Kind of Love* (1963), *Winning* (1969), *WUSA* (1970), *The Drowning Pool* (1975), *Harry & Son* (1984), and *Mr. and Mrs. Bridge* (1990). They had three daughters, Elinor, Melissa, and Claire.

By the 1960s, Newman was undeniably a movie star, known as much for his ability to take on complex roles as for his blue eyes and matinee-idol charm. *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1958), which paired him with the equally photogenic Elizabeth Taylor as Maggie the Cat, was his first blockbuster hit; *The Hustler* (1961) followed not long after. He later reprised his *Hustler* role as Fast Eddie Felson in *The Color of Money*, for which he won his only Oscar. Movie after movie cast him in especially masculine roles—pool sharks, gunslingers and other cowboys, spies, detectives, racecar drivers, and the title



Paul Newman, as Ari Ben Canaan, in the 1960 film *Exodus*. (Sunset Boulevard/Corbis)

character in *Cool Hand Luke* (1967). At the same time, especially in the 1970s with movies like *WUSA* (about a radio station's role in a right-wing conspiracy) and Robert Altman's 1976 *Buffalo Bill and the Indians* (in which Sitting Bull refuses to play out revisionist history for Newman's Buffalo Bill Cody), the actor showed a vital interest in social and political concerns, shared by his wife and by Robert Redford, his co-star in the George Roy Hill movies *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969) and *The Sting* (1973). The Redford collaborations, *Buffalo Bill*, and *Slap Shot* (1977, also by Hill) showed off the actor's comedic chops, something too rarely on display in his earlier work.

The 1980s saw Newman's career slow down, though he received Oscar nominations for *Absence of Malice* (1981) and *The Verdict* (1982), and again in 1994 for *Nobody's Fool*, a character study of aging rambunctious construction worker Sully. That same year, he chewed the scenery in the Coen brothers' broad screwball comedy *The Hudsucker Proxy*, as the unscrupulous industrial tycoon Sidney Mussburger.

His last big-screen role (save for *Cars*, in which he did voice work) yielded his 10th Oscar nomination: in 2002's *Road to Perdition*, based on the Max Allan Collins graphic novel, Newman played Irish American crime boss John Rooney, whose foster son (Tom Hanks) pursues a vendetta against his biological son (Daniel Craig). Newman was director Sam Mendes's first choice for the role.

A prolific actor, Newman's directorial output was considerably slimmer—but also more focused on those things that were personal to him and of less commercial interest than many of his movies. He directed Woodward in *Rachel, Rachel* (1968), an adaptation of Margaret Laurence's *Jest of God*, the story of a woman's "second adolescence" when she discovers romance one summer; *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds* (1972), which adapted Paul Zindel's play; and *The Glass Menagerie* (1987), an adaptation of the Tennessee Williams play. *Sometimes a Great Notion* (1970) starred Newman as Ken Kesey's strong-willed logger, while *Harry & Son* (1984), adapting Don Capite's novel *The Lost King*, cast him as the working-class father who doesn't understand his sensitive son (Robby Benson), who wants to be a writer.

After *Sometimes a Great Notion*, Newman, Barbra Streisand, and Steve McQueen co-founded First Artists, a production company modeled after United Artists and meant to let actors produce their own projects.

In 1982, Newman co-founded Newman's Own with writer A. E. Hotchner, starting with a line of salad dressings and expanding to other products, with an emphasis on quality ingredients. After taxes and expenses, all profits are donated to charity. Newman's oldest daughter with Joanne, Elinor, acted under the name Nell Potts (in both *Rachel, Rachel* and *The Effect of Gamma Rays*), before founding Newman's Own Organics in 1993, an extension of the brand. In the wake of her father's death—of lung cancer on September 26, 2008, at age 83—she now heads the company.

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—Bill Kte'pi

NICHOLS, MIKE. Mike Nichols (born Michael Igor Peschkowsky in 1931) fled Nazi Germany with his family in 1939, later attended the University of Chicago, and began his theatrical career there as an improvisational comic actor. He is one of the few directors of his era to be still in demand, both on Broadway and in Hollywood, though he has received far more acclaim for his theatrical work than for his work in cinema. His films have received numerous Academy Award nominations, though he has won Best Director only once, for *The Graduate*, in 1967.

Nichols's transition from theatrical direction to film appears in retrospect to be almost predestined, though in fact he has returned again and again to the theatre when his film work has failed to interest either audiences or critics. His two earliest ventures in film direction—*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1966) and *The Graduate* were hugely successful, and served to catapult him to the A-list of young directors of the 1960s. Both films openly challenged contemporary sexual mores and the Production Code that sought to restrict (or repress altogether) any open and candid presentation of sexuality in American movies. Indeed, Nichols's eagerness to challenge, and even offend, his audiences' moral sensibilities remains one of the most enduring traits of his films, right up to the present.

Nichols's timing in the making of *Virginia Woolf* and *The Graduate* could not have been better. Jack Valenti had just taken over the presidency of the MPAA (Motion Picture Association of America), and had already decided to scrap the old Production Code in favor of a more precise ratings system, implicitly acknowledging that public tastes had changed since the 1930s. That said, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* pushes the cultural envelope as far as it can through its open discussion of sexual dysfunction and marital infidelity, combined with profanity-laced dialogue that startled theatrical audiences in 1962. Ernest Lehman's screenplay stays as close to Edward Albee's drama

as possible, while Nichols (and his cinematographer, Haskell Wexler) makes several obvious attempts to move beyond the proscenium arch and open up the often claustrophobic inner space of this domestic melodrama. Nichols's choice of Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton as the ill-suited academic couple-from-hell was obviously dictated by a desire to capitalize on the Burtons' celebrity—and on their penchant for public brawling—but in the end, each gives the performance of a lifetime, guaranteeing Academy Award nominations for both.

Nichols's next film, *The Graduate*, generated even more controversy, while introducing a young, largely unknown Dustin Hoffman to contemporary audiences. Adapting Charles Webb's 1963 coming-of-age novel to the antiestablishment sensibility of the later 1960s, Nichols, and his screenwriters, Calder Willingham and Buck Henry, transformed a dialogue-heavy and rather banal piece of fiction into a satirical tour-de-force. The casting for this film has since become the stuff of Hollywood legend, and audiences can still be startled to learn that Anne Bancroft—who plays the cynical middle-age seductress, Mrs. Robinson to Hoffman's twenty-something Benjamin Braddock—was in fact only six years older than her co-star. Both performances, complemented by a large cast of supportive character actors, give this film its lasting edge, offering up a series of middle-class caricatures whose lives are aptly summed up in the film's comic tag-line "plastics." By adding the music of Simon and Garfunkel to the soundtrack, Nichols insured that contemporary audiences would respond to this movie the way theatre-going audiences tend to react to topical musical comedies. Though *The Graduate* received half as many Academy Award nominations as *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, it brought the one that Nichols, of course, most coveted: Best Director.

Over the next seven years, Nichols threw himself into a series of film projects, nearly all of which turned out to be poor creative investments with diminishing critical as well as financial returns. His 1970 adaptation of Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*—a greatly admired, narratively complex antiwar novel—ran into funding difficulties long before its release, and contemporary audiences found it far less amusing or even poignant than its obvious competitor of that year, *M*A*S*H**, which drew upon exactly the same revulsion toward the war in Vietnam on which *Catch-22* tried to capitalize. Nichols's next film, *Carnal Knowledge* (1971), met a similar fate, though its production values (and overall production costs) were only a fraction of *Catch-22*'s, and its linear plot not nearly as disjointed. Jules Feiffer's script spans a period of 25 years in the lives of two college friends whose misadventures in love and lust form the focus of this essentially two-character film. *Carnal Knowledge* marks the beginning of Nichols's creative relationship with Jack Nicholson, with whom he was to make two additional films, but neither Nicholson's trademark grin nor Art Garfunkel's earnest (but largely affectless) line readings were able to save this film from ultimate banality. *Carnal Knowledge* is perhaps best remembered today for the lawsuit it inspired in the state of Georgia, where it was found to be obscene for its frank portrayal of sexual relationships. The U.S. Supreme Court, in a landmark ruling (1974), concluded that Nichols's film exhibited none of the traits that defined "hard core" pornography.

The last two films from this period, *The Day of the Dolphin* (1973) and *The Fortune* (1975), were such flops that no one was really surprised by Nichols's decision to

abandon filmmaking for the next seven years and to concentrate instead on the theatre, where he enjoyed much greater success. Of the two, *The Fortune* has acquired the dubious honor of being labeled a “Golden Turkey,” but in truth neither film had a script worthy of the talents of its leading actors. In *The Day of the Dolphin*, George C. Scott labors to teach two charming and utterly anthropomorphic dolphins to speak a kind of high-pitched English, only to discover that a sinister government-connected agency is secretly plotting to use them to assassinate the president. As for *The Fortune*, neither Jack Nicholson nor Warren Beatty is able to bring the least bit of comic credibility to a plot that turns on their attempts to exploit, then murder, the heiress to a sanitary-napkin empire, and when this expensive but humorless attempt at screwball comedy tanked at the box office, Nichols realized it was time for a break.

Apart from a performance movie featuring Gilda Radner (*Gilda Live*, 1980) doing many of the character skits she had already developed for *Saturday Night Live*, Nichols avoided the world of cinema until 1983, when he shot *Silkwood*, starring Meryl Streep as the title character. Nichols half-resists and half-surrenders to the powerful temptation to spin a conspiracy theory around the life and death of Karen Silkwood, whose whistle-blowing actions at an Oklahoma nuclear plant seemed to many at the time to be directly related to her mysterious traffic death. Streep’s totally convincing performance and Nichols’s unheroic depiction of her life and loves aroused favorable comparisons to similar working-class melodramas, such as *Norma Rae*. Nichols was sufficiently impressed by Streep’s work on this film to cast her three years later opposite Jack Nicholson in *Heartburn* (1986), a social comedy constructed around a Nora Ephron script about a yuppie marriage gone bad. Nicholson (as always) creates a credible portrait of a charming cad, while Streep struggles to make the wronged wife something other than pathetic or boring; neither actor, however, was able to rescue this film from a largely uninteresting and predictable plot. Nichols’s *Biloxi Blues* (1988) met with a similarly mixed response from viewers two years later. Neil Simon adapted this hit play to the screen—it constitutes the second in Simon’s trilogy of mostly autobiographical coming-of-age plays—but the results were seen as passable to dull. Though many found Matthew Broderick a charming fictional stand-in for Simon, “barracks comedies” had become a minefield of clichés by the late 1980s, and Nichols’s direction was seen to offer little more than a faithful transcription of the theatrical original.

Nichols’s second film of 1988, *Working Girl*, met with a very different fate, and for the first time in decades Nichols found himself with a certifiable hit. Described by one critic as a modern-day urban fairy tale, *Working Girl* combines elements of mordant social satire with the conventions of modern romantic comedy, as Nichols follows the career trajectory of an ambitious working-class heroine (played by Melanie Griffith) from the secretarial pool to the executive suites of ruthlessly competitive corporations, while allowing her to succeed by pluck, brains, and sexual charm. Channeling Judy Holliday, Griffith manages to appear both shrewd and endearingly naive as she simultaneously disposes of a cunning rival (Sigourney Weaver), gets the job of her dreams, and lands the man she loves (Harrison Ford). As in *The Graduate*, Nichols found himself benefiting greatly from a hit song, this time written by yet

another songwriter named Simon—Carly Simon—whose “Let the River Run” won the only Academy Award *Working Girl* received.

By the early 1990s, Nichols was in familiar territory once again: satirical portraits of dysfunctional personalities caught up in dysfunctional environments. In *Postcards from the Edge* (1990), Nichols employs Meryl Streep’s considerable talents to very little effect in an adaptation of Carrie Fisher’s thinly veiled autobiographical novel of an aspiring (albeit drug-addled) actress growing up in a show-business family. Shirley MacLaine offers a tart caricature of a domineering and largely unsympathetic actress-mother, but the principal novelty of this film is its supposed resemblance to the real-life Carrie Fisher/Debbie Reynolds relationship. *Regarding Henry* (1991) aspires to be a far more serious take on the yuppie class and its seemingly incurable narcissism, but with no greater dramatic success than in *Postcards from the Edge*, and without a trace of humor. Harrison Ford’s Henry Turner presumably undergoes an affective transformation from predatory lawyer to born-again husband and father, but even a bullet to the hero’s brain—and the obligatory amnesia that follows—did not succeed in convincing most audiences that this badly scripted morality tale had even a trace of moral credibility.

Nichols’s next assignment, *Wolf* (1994), probably qualifies as the most offbeat subject he has tackled to date: latter-day werewolves at large in the Big Apple. The decision to cast Jack Nicholson in the title role was seen by critics as either inspired or slightly perverse, since even without makeup, Nicholson’s characteristic facial expressions are vaguely lupine. But in what appears, at first, to be a case of reverse casting, Nicholson’s character (Will Randall) is presented to us as a mild-mannered and easily exploited book editor in an urban jungle where only the duplicitous survive. Once bitten, however, Randall’s passive aggression gives way to brazen cunning and carnality, and from this point in the film Nicholson’s talent for dramatic anarchy and comic mayhem is given full rein. The result is a movie that shifts unpredictably from horror to bitter comedy of manners, back to horror again, without ever really merging these two disparate genres into one. Nevertheless, Ennio Morricone’s resonant score and Giuseppe Rotunno’s occasionally haunting cinematography give *Wolf* a look and a sound that place it in a category well-above most factory-made horror flicks.

Returning again to satiric comedy—a genre with which he obviously feels entirely at ease—Nichols next remade the Jean Poiret/Francis Weber sex farce of the 1970s, *La Cage aux Folles*, as *The Birdcage* (1996), featuring new songs by Stephen Sondheim and a cast led by Robin Williams and Gene Hackman. Watching pompous personalities expose themselves to ridicule is a staple of satire, and Nichols has as much fun as he can stripping away the respectable persona of Gene Hackman’s right-wing Senator Keeley while getting in as many jabs as possible at arch-conservative views toward gays and Jews. Yet in spite of its commercial success, *The Birdcage* never managed to create characters who rise above the level of caricature, and the plot contrivances that bring the two young lovers together at last are just that: contrivances in a bedroom comedy-by-numbers.

In *Primary Colors* (1998), Nichols casts a satiric glance at the Clinton administration, casting John Travolta as Jack Stanton—a Clinton look-alike whose folksy charm and compulsive womanizing are disturbingly close to reality—and Emma

Thompson as his long-suffering wife and unofficial political manager. Based on a Joe Klein roman à clef, and released in the aftermath of the Monica Lewinsky scandal, Nichols's often biting portrait of the Clintons and their team of campaign operatives is only slightly more grotesque than real life, and it is never quite clear why anyone should care whether characters as morally clueless or disingenuous as the Stantons finally succeed in outrunning the scandals that follow them wherever they go. Compared with Michael Ritchie's *The Candidate* (1972)—which takes the American political process seriously enough to dissect its glaring weaknesses—*Primary Colors* seems only to lampoon its characters and then feebly moralize upon them.

Nichols's next foray into comic absurdity, *What Planet Are You From?* (2000), was no more successful, either with critics or at the box office. With Gary Shandling in the role of an extraterrestrial in search of an earthly bride, Nichols tries, to no avail, to mine whatever humor can be found in a drama of planetary opposites attracting. Annette Bening, the hapless object of the spaceman's affections, gives a game performance but cannot really compete with a mechanical penis and an episodic plot that goes nowhere. Not even the labors of Elaine May and Joe Klein were sufficient to bring this film to life.

But as so often happens when Nichols's film career seems sunk in mediocrity, he took a sharp turn in dramatic style and substance toward a form of tragicomedy in his next, and arguably one of his most accomplished films of the new millennium, *Wit* (2001). Working from a script he and his lead actress, Emma Thompson, had adapted from Margaret Edson's play, Nichols places Thompson's character, Vivian Bearing, at the center of virtually every scene, often speaking directly to the camera in what amounts to a sustained (and only occasionally interrupted) monologue. As a professor of English literature who has specialized in the poetry of John Donne, Bearing is haunted and then consoled by the words of Donne's "Holy Sonnet X"—"Death be not proud . . ."—as she lies dying of cervical cancer. With unsparing wit she dissects her emotions, her interactions with physicians, and her memories of a past that is rapidly receding from view. Few films have ever presented the terrifying reality of certain death with less sentimentality or greater intellectual clarity, and Thompson's performance is one of the most brilliant expressions of a fully realized personality that Nichols has ever elicited from the many talented actors he has directed.

Nichols's next film, *Angels in America* (2003), like *Wit*, was adapted from a hit play and released on HBO, where it attracted huge audiences that might never have gone to see Tony Kushner's theatrical production. With a screenplay adapted by Kushner himself, and cast including Al Pacino, Meryl Streep, and (once again) Emma Thompson playing multiple roles in a fractured narrative that moves between heaven and earth, and between moral allegory and satire, Nichols constructs a surreal multipart drama that focuses on the AIDS epidemic and a political culture that makes denial and sexual hypocrisy possible. Though occasionally stridently didactic, *Angels in America* is often eloquent in its evocation of personal anguish and indignation as it mounts a case for compassion and moral honesty in the face of a latter-day plague.

Closer (2004), yet another adaptation of a successful stage play of the same name, attempts something far more modest, or at least apolitical—though no less structurally intricate—as Nichols fashions a drama of sexual duplicity modeled after Mozart's *Cosi*

Fan Tutte. Unlike Mozart, however, Nichols and his screenwriter Patrick Marber (who also wrote the original stage play) construct a complicated quadrille of changing sex partners and shifting identities, and the end result is a work that views love and the business of coupling in a much darker light than one often encounters in Nichols's earlier films. A similar attitude of bemused cynicism permeates Nichols's latest film, *Charlie Wilson's War* (2007), though unlike *Angels in America* and *Closer*, Nichols's original "text" is a journalistic expose of U.S. involvement in the Afghan-Soviet war and the Texas congressman who badgered the CIA and the Pentagon to back the Afghan *mujahadeen*. Nichols and his screenwriter, Aaron Sorkin (of *West Wing* fame), of course, have the benefit of ironic hindsight as they trace the initial involvement and subsequent disengagement of the Reagan White House in Afghan politics, but most of their attention is devoted to the central figure in this diplomatic melodrama, Representative Charlie Wilson himself. Tom Hanks's portrayal of this figure as part clown and part idealist probably evokes more sympathy for his character than the real-life Wilson deserves, but Nichols's nuanced perception of his protagonist's awakening to the seriousness of his campaign—and the potentially disastrous consequences of the events he has set in motion—give this film a sharper edge than one would expect from a script that sees American foreign policy as the work of ideological schemers and buffoons. Clearly, Nichols's trademark irony and occasionally savage humor—some of the many gifts of a cultural outsider—have survived into the fifth decade of his filmmaking career.

Selected Filmography

Charlie Wilson's War (2007); *Closer* (2004); *What Planet Are You From?* (2000); *Primary Colors* (1998); *The Birdcage* (1996); *Wolf* (1994); *Regarding Henry* (1991); *Postcards from the Edge* (1990); *Working Girl* (1988); *Biloxi Blues* (1988); *Heartburn* (1986); *Silkwood* (1983); *The Fortune* (1975); *The Day of the Dolphin* (1973); *Carnal Knowledge* (1971); *Catch-22* (1970); *The Graduate* (1967); *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1966)

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—Robert Platzner

NICHOLSON, JACK. An iconic American actor, Jack Nicholson has successfully entertained audiences worldwide for more than five decades. In large part, this has been due to his enormous talent as a Method actor and his willingness to portray

unconventional and sometimes unsympathetic characters. Equally important has been Nicholson's willingness to take on roles in pictures that cross various film genres.

John Joseph "Jack" Nicholson was born on April 22, 1937, in Neptune, New Jersey, and was raised by his grandparents, Ethel May and John Nicholson. In 1957, while visiting an older sister in Los Angeles, Nicholson took a job as an office boy in the animation department at MGM. It was while working at MGM that Nicholson met movie producer Joe Pasternak, who encouraged him to take acting lessons and to join the Players Ring Theatre Troupe. While taking acting lessons, he met Roger Corman, an up-and-coming director of B-movies who would give Nicholson his first film role in *The Cry Baby Killer* (1958). Throughout the 1960s, he took roles in numerous low-budget B-movies that appealed more to counter-culture audiences than they did to mainstream America audiences. These movies included *Little Shop of Horrors* (1960), *The Raven* (1963), *The Terror* (1963), and *Easy Rider* (1969), which earned him his first Academy Award nomination.

In 1970, Nicholson portrayed a concert pianist in the critically acclaimed *Five Easy Pieces*, which earned him a second Academy Award nomination. He secured his third Academy Award nomination for his role in the 1973 *The Last Detail*. In 1975, he portrayed Randle Patrick McMurphy, a patient in a mental hospital, in the critically acclaimed *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*. The success of the picture earned Nicholson his first Academy Award for Best Actor, and also catapulted the young star to movie star status.

Nicholson began the 1980s with a stunning performance in *The Shining* (1980). Today, it is still considered to be one of his most significant roles. Throughout the 1980s, Nicholson took on numerous roles in movies that became box-office hits. His choice of roles often involved characters who faced life-changing situations. He also began to play characters that were the same age as the actor. This allowed Nicholson



Movie star Jack Nicholson in 1970. (AP/Wide World Photos)

to remain profitable for movie studios and popular with American audiences. One such example was his portrayal of a middle-aged ex-astronaut in the blockbuster hit *Terms of Endearment* (1983), for which he won an Academy Award. In 1985, he earned an Academy Award nomination for his portrayal of a mafia killer in another hit, *Prizzi's Honor*. In 1987, he played the devil in the successful *The Witches of Eastwick*, and in 1989, he played the Joker in the international blockbuster, *Batman*.

During the 1990s, Nicholson, who had indisputably reached superstar status, continued to choose diverse roles. In 1992, he received an Academy Award nomination for his role in *A Few Good Men*. Then, in 1997, he won another Academy Award for his performance in the critically acclaimed *As Good As It Gets*.

Throughout the 2000s, Nicholson continued to choose characters who were age appropriate. In 2002, he played a retired actuary in the highly successful *About Schmidt*. In 2003, he played an aging playboy in *Something's Gotta Give*, and in 2006, he took on the role of a mob boss in *The Departed*. In 2008, he co-starred with Morgan Freeman in *The Bucket List*. Aging, terminally ill men, the characters set out to fulfill a list of life goals before dying.

For more than five decades, Jack Nicholson has entertained American audiences. His enormous talents as a Method actor combined with his unconventional and varied character choices have produced numerous box-office hits. It is a measure of his talent and success that he has received 12 Academy Award nominations and has won 3. Today, Nicholson holds the honor of being the most nominated male actor in Academy Award history. Now considered an American movie icon, Nicholson continues to entertain movie audiences.

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—Bernadette Zbicki Heiney

PACINO, AL. An award-winning stage and screen actor, Al Pacino is one of the most enduring and respected figures in entertainment history. Now in his fifth decade of acting, he has created an unrivaled legacy of Method acting, carving out memorable roles in such iconic films as *The Godfather* (1972), *Serpico* (1974), *Scarface* (1983), and *Scent of a Woman* (1992). Not limited to acting in film, Pacino has also found success on Broadway, in television, and as a producer, screenwriter, and director.

Alfredo James Pacino was born April 25, 1940 in East Harlem, New York. At age two, Pacino, nicknamed Sonny, moved in with his grandparents following the divorce of his parents. Unmotivated in his studies, Pacino found relief by reenacting scenes from films as well as acting in school plays. Dropping out of school at 16, he spent the next 10 years working odd jobs, accepting bit parts in plays, and taking acting classes when he could afford them.

Pacino's first breakthrough came in 1966 when he was accepted into Lee Strasberg's Actors Studio. Strasberg's influential school of Method acting proved to be a revelation for Pacino. Initial success on Broadway playing a junkie in *Does a Tiger Wear a Necktie?* garnered him a Tony Award and, most importantly, the attention of Hollywood. His portrayal of yet another addict in *The Panic of Needle Park* (1971) led to a connection with to a young director named Francis Ford Coppola.

Coppola, set to direct the screen adaptation of Mario Puzo's bestselling novel *The Godfather*, fought studio executives and Puzo himself who believed Pacino was the wrong actor for the role of Michael Corleone. Coppola triumphed and Pacino's smoldering, inward-focused performance moved him past typecasting in psychotic or addict roles. *The Godfather* (1972) brought Pacino his first of seven Academy Award nominations.

Stardom came quickly for Pacino, and the rest of the 1970s saw him mix powerful performances in *Serpico* (1973), *The Godfather Part II* (1974), and *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975) with personal drug addiction and a general aversion to his new stardom. In fact, he was offered and turned down roles in *Star Wars* (1977), *Kramer vs. Kramer* (1979), and *Apocalypse Now* (1979) to take parts in a string of unforgettable films.

Pacino's portrayal of Tony Montana in *Scarface* (1983) helped him resurface as one of the best Method actors in the business. Still in character offscreen, Pacino came



Actor Al Pacino is seen as Michael Corleone in a scene from the motion picture *The Godfather*. (AP/Wide World Photos)

face-to-face with a neighbor's ravenous attack dog and instead of shying away, channeled Tony Montana and yelled, "Back off!" to which the dog eagerly obliged. Initially ridiculed by critics, *Scarface* (1983) has lived on as a cult classic. The rest of the 1980s saw Pacino act in only five films. He spent a great deal of time getting sober, seeking therapy, and acting on the stage.

A comedic turn in *Dick Tracy* (1990) garnered Pacino his sixth Academy Award nomination, and from there good parts grew plentiful again. His role as the blind, pugnacious Lieutenant Colonel Frank Slade in 1992's *Scent of Woman* earned him his elusive, first Academy Award. His personal and professional life now in harmony, Pacino solidified his place as a culturally significant contributor to the entertainment industry. He acted

alongside Hollywood stalwart Robert De Niro in *Heat* (1995) and wrote, produced, and directed the highly acclaimed Shakespeare adaptation, *Looking for Richard* (1996).

Not content with being the elder statesman, Pacino continued to stretch his acting range throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s. He played a low-level mobster in 1997's *Donnie Brasco*, Satan in the flesh in *The Devil's Advocate* (1997), a weary coach in Oliver Stone's football drama *Any Given Sunday* (1999), and cop-on-the-edge in *Insomnia* (2002). In each role, Pacino surprised audiences and acted as mentor to his younger co-stars.

Whether a mafia kingpin, whistle-blower cop, blind retired lieutenant colonel, or stressed-out real estate agent, Pacino has been a significant cultural and historical contributor in the world of entertainment. Despite personal and professional setbacks, he has operated on his own terms and become one of the greatest actors of the last 40 years. Perfecting the practice of Method acting, Pacino is a stalwart in the industry and shows no signs of slowing down anytime soon.

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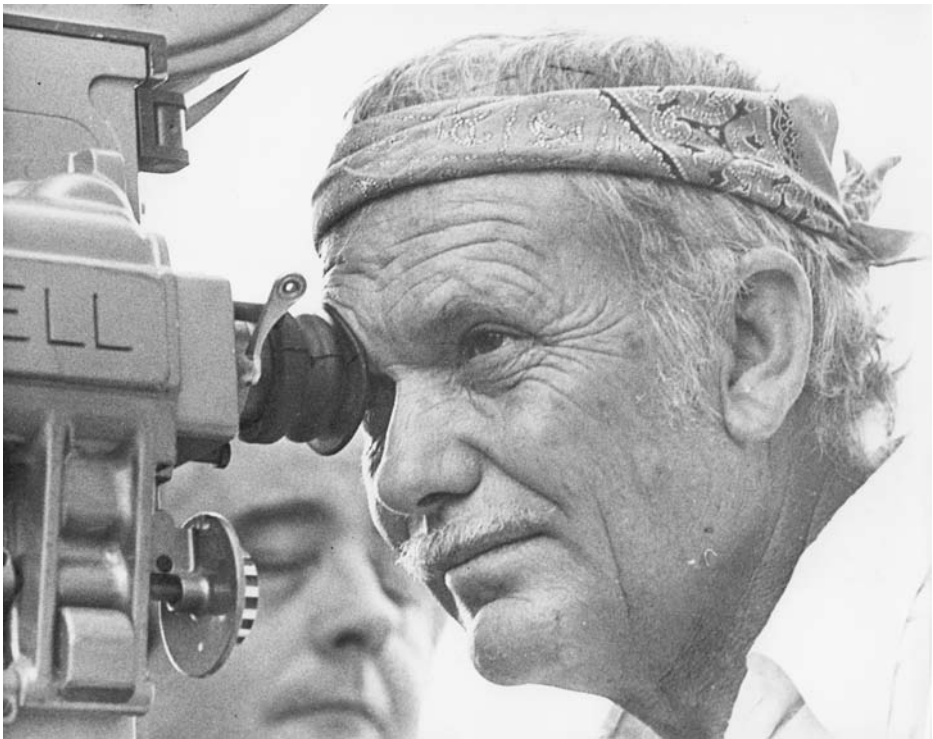
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—Lucas Calhoun

PECKINPAH, SAM. “The outlaws of the old West have always fascinated me,” Sam Peckinpah said. “I suppose I’m a bit of an outlaw myself.” Peckinpah’s ancestors were pioneers. Once merchants and farmers in Illinois, they crossed the continent by covered wagon in the 1850s and settled in California, where they entered the logging business. The Peckinpahs established a lumber mill atop a mountain near Coarsegold, California, and the names Peckinpah Meadow and Peckinpah Creek appear today on the official U.S. geographical maps. Peckinpah’s father, David Edward, had worked on Denver Church’s sprawling ranch as a cowhand and later married Church’s daughter Fern. The Churches were among the oldest Fresno families. Church later became a Superior Court Judge and then a California Congressman. Peckinpah’s father followed Denver into the legal profession with his help.

David Samuel Peckinpah, born on January 25, 1925, grew up in California’s cherry-picking capital of Fresno. As contentious in his youth as any of his film protagonists, Peckinpah preferred outdoor activities on the cattle ranch of his maternal grandfather, Denver Church, to being stuck in a school classroom. Peckinpah heard many stories about the old West from the sons of nineteenth-century miners and ranchers who toiled on Church’s ranch. These stories, and the strict moral code that Denver and Peckinpah’s father maintained, made a powerful impression on young Sam. The family was disappointed when Sam sought a career in the entertainment



Film director Sam Peckinpah looks through the camera lens while filming *Cross of Iron* in 1977. (Getty Images)

industry rather than entering the legal profession. Hoping to set him on the right path, and to deal with his fiery temper, Peckinpah's parents transferred him during his senior year from Fresno High School to the San Rafael Military Academy in 1943; although he enlisted in the Marines in 1945, he missed out on any action in the South Pacific. Peckinpah's battalion wound up in China, where he disarmed Japanese soldiers and repatriated them. These frontier tales and war experiences undoubtedly inspired Peckinpah's penchant for telling stories about law and order and foreshadowed his contentious attitude that soured so many relationships with producers.

Although Peckinpah directed only four westerns during the 1960s, he emerged from that turbulent decade as one of the most creative and controversial figures in Hollywood. In many ways, Peckinpah proved to be his own worst enemy, and many of the setbacks that he suffered occurred because he refused, like his filmic protagonists, to genuflect to a higher authority. Impelled to follow his father's rigid moral code, he began to set standards for himself that others could rarely meet. Peckinpah's career began in network television as a writer for series such as *Gunsmoke* (1955), *Trackdown* (1957), *Tombstone Territory* (1957), and *Broken Arrow* (1958). He also served as an assistant to director Don Siegel on five films, notably *Riot in Cell Block 11* (1954) and *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956). Peckinpah created the television western *The Rifleman* in 1958. The story followed a widowed father—the rifleman (Chuck Connors)—attempting to raise his son without subjecting him to the violence of the frontier. He also created *The Westerner*, but the network canceled it after 13 episodes. Although *The Rifleman* lasted five years, Peckinpah quit the series in 1959 because the producers changed the content of the show so as to appeal to children rather than adults.

Difficult at best, Peckinpah did not suffer fools gladly. He clashed with producers and studio heads on *The Deadly Companions* (1961), *Ride the High Country* (1962), and *Major Dundee* (1965). MGM did little to promote his first classic, *Ride the High Country*, allowing it to languish even after the picture received critical praise. Quarrels with *Major Dundee* producer Jerry Bresler and later Martin Ransohoff on *The Cincinnati Kid* (1965) (Ransohoff fired Peckinpah after five days for shooting a nude scene with Ann-Margret) led to three years of being blacklisted until producer Daniel Melnick signed him to direct Katherine Anne Porter's drama *Noon Wine* (1966) for ABC-TV. Peckinpah penned two western screenplays, for *The Glory Guys* (1965) and *Villa Rides* (1968), only to have both significantly rewritten.

Peckinpah released his masterpiece, *The Wild Bunch*, in 1969. It proved to be one of the most violent films ever produced—moving far beyond even the violence of Arthur Penn's *Bonnie and Clyde*—earning the director the nickname "Bloody Sam." Yet, while the picture was ridiculed by some as being nothing more than a slide into gratuitous brutality, Peckinpah's film troped the traditional notion of the West as a place of promise where intrepid pioneers bring civilization to savagery; Peckinpah's West was a dying dystopian wasteland, populated by outlaws and mercenaries who have finally outlived their usefulness. Interestingly, the father of the traditional Hollywood western, John Ford, had hinted at the need to deconstruct the mythological sensibilities of the western when he made *The Searchers* in 1956, but Ford had given his hard-edged picture a sentimental ending; not so Peckinpah, who created

such a disturbingly vicious finale for *The Wild Bunch* that even today, it still shocks when watched for the first time.

The Wild Bunch rejuvenated Peckinpah's career, but he failed to capitalize on the film's success, following it with *The Ballad of Cable Hogue* (1970), a picture about a maverick drifter who stumbles onto a watering hole and turns it into a profitable stage-coach relay station. Peckinpah next traveled to England to make *Straw Dogs* (1971), which starred Dustin Hoffman as an astrophysicist hero who must repel home invaders; the bloody struggle that ensued between hero and villains rekindled the pyrotechnics of *The Wild Bunch*. Surprisingly, nobody died in Peckinpah's next film, the rodeo epic *Junior Bonner* (1971), which featured the laconic Steve McQueen in the lead role. Although *Junior Bonner* proved unsuccessful, Peckinpah scored a hit when he again teamed with McQueen to make the contemporary bank robbery saga *The Getaway* in 1972.

The failure of *Pat Garrett & Billy the Kid* in 1973 marked a turning point in Peckinpah's career, one from which he never recovered. He would go on to helm the spy film *The Killer Elite* and a World War II epic about German soldiers on the Russian Front, *Cross of Iron*, but the irascible Peckinpah would succumb to a heart attack on December 28, 1984, at only 59. Although he never won an Oscar, Peckinpah looms as a seminal figure in American cinematic history, largely because of *The Wild Bunch*; despite the inconsistent quality of his films, he nevertheless left behind a body of work that continues to inspire other filmmakers.

Selected Filmography

The Osterman Weekend (1983); *Convoy* (1978); *Cross of Iron* (1977); *The Killer Elite* (1975); *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia* (1974); *Pat Garrett & Billy the Kid* (1973); *The Getaway* (1972); *Junior Bonner* (1972); *Straw Dogs* (1971); *The Ballad of Cable Hogue* (1970); *The Wild Bunch* (1969); *The Glory Guys* (1965); *Major Dundee* (1965); *Ride the High Country* (1962); *The Deadly Companions* (1961)

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—Van Roberts

PENN, ARTHUR. Despite not having garnered as much critical praise as some of his contemporaries, Arthur Penn is arguably the quintessential figure of what came to be called the era of the New Hollywood, roughly from the late 1960s through the early 1970s. Indeed, it may be that more than any other film, Penn's *Bonnie and Clyde*

(1967) was representative of the era it helped ignite; and Penn's entire corpus of work during this renaissance is more generically diverse—and offers perhaps the greatest historical and social scope—than that of any of his contemporaries. His was not the only work to suffer as the renaissance made way for the blockbuster aesthetics of Steven Spielberg and George Lucas, but it did so remarkably swiftly and Penn was never able to return to form.

Born in Philadelphia on September 27, 1922, Penn had already acquired extensive experience prior to his film career, both in television, like Robert Altman, and in theater, like Mike Nichols. In fact, his second film and first success was an adaptation of his Tony Award-winning stage production of William Gibson's play *The Miracle Worker*. Although the film was critically acclaimed and received Academy Awards for its two leading ladies, Anne Bancroft and Patty Duke, it is something of an anomaly in Penn's career as it harkens back to the aesthetics of the old Hollywood era. (While *The Chase* [1966] might be said to embrace classical Hollywood traditions in terms of form, it is thematically and politically the perfect opposite of the Hollywood of old.) Even his low-budget debut western *The Left Handed Gun* (1958) is much more modern in comparison, expressing a certain self-reflexivity in both subject and form, while Paul Newman's portrayal of Billy the Kid prefigures the countercultural heroes of the future. Penn's most experimental film, *Mickey One* (1965), followed, and while it never received the critical attention it deserved, it brought Penn together with Warren Beatty, in a partnership that would catapult them both to fame.

Bonnie and Clyde opened in the fall of 1967 to mixed reviews and little box-office success, but an eventual if belated critical interest in the film sparked a successful re-release that culminated in 10 Academy Award nominations, with its cultural significance extending well beyond the world of the movies. The film not only offered a fresh retelling of the outlaw-couple Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker, and one that was compatible with the 1960s counterculture; it also ushered in the era of modern representation of violence on the American screen, most vividly through its memorable slow-motion carnage of the couple, while also introducing the aesthetics and attitude of the French New Wave to mainstream Hollywood cinema. Interestingly, the script was first offered to François Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard, and it was quite appropriate that it should end up in Penn's hands, as perhaps no other American film is as indebted to the French New Wave as his earlier *Mickey One*.

The 1960s countercultural movement was itself the subject of Penn's next film, *Alice's Restaurant* (1969). Despite being based on a song by Arlo Guthrie, who also stars in the film, it gently mocks rather than celebrates the movement. Some of the humor of *Alice's Restaurant* did carry into Penn's next film, the western *Little Big Man* (1970); the latter was, however, a much darker film that drew parallels between the genocide of Native Americans and the current U.S. war against Vietnam. Completely devoid of humor, the noirish thriller *Night Moves* (1975) was Penn's darkest work, and its bleakest of all endings seemed to reflect the impasse of a politically bankrupt America in the mid-1970s. Penn's final contribution to the renaissance, with its short life span already drawing to a close, was another dreary western, *The Missouri Breaks* (1976), in which two of the era's greatest stars, Jack Nicholson and Marlon Brando, found themselves in a gruesome but pointless struggle to the death.

Although never a prolific director, a whole five years were to pass before Penn completed his next film, *Four Friends* (1981). The film offered one final look back to the 1960s, before Penn succumbed to the conservative ideology of the Reagan era with the thriller *Target* (1985). He directed his last film, *Penn and Teller Get Killed*, in 1989, although he was to return occasionally to television. Perhaps Penn's swift demise in the blockbuster era helps explain the lack of critical recognition regarding his oeuvre, but there should be little doubt about his central role in the brief but celebrated era of the Hollywood renaissance.

Selected Filmography

Lumière and Company (1995); *Penn and Teller Get Killed* (1989); *Dead of Winter* (1987); *Target* (1985); *Four Friends* (1981); *The Missouri Breaks* (1976); *Night Moves* (1975); *Little Big Man* (1970); *Alice's Restaurant* (1969); *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967); *The Chase* (1966); *Mickey One* (1965); *The Miracle Worker* (1962); *The Left Handed Gun* (1958)

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—Björn Nordfjörd

PICKFORD, MARY. Mary Pickford became the most popular star of the silent era as well as the most powerful woman in early Hollywood. Known as “America’s Sweetheart,” she typically portrayed good girls in dramatic roles. To obtain greater creative control, she founded the United Artists film studio in 1919 with Douglas Fairbanks Sr., Charlie Chaplin, and D. W. Griffith.

In later years, Pickford would claim that she came from a privileged background. In truth, she had the same poverty-stricken background as many other early film actors. She was born on April 8, 1892, as Gladys Louise Smith in Toronto, to John Smith, a ship’s steward, and Charlotte Hennessey. John Smith died in a shipboard accident in 1897, leaving his family in dire financial straits. Pickford’s mother held the family together by permitting her children, including Jack and Lottie, to appear onstage. From 1898 to 1907, the family toured with various theatrical companies, barely earning enough to survive. In 1908, Pickford, now using her stage name, landed a two-year role on Broadway in a David Belasco play.

When the play closed, Pickford’s mother persuaded her to try her luck in the motion picture industry that was emerging in New York City. At this point, appearing in films did not have the same cachet as appearing onstage, so Pickford essentially took



Film star Mary Pickford, 1921. (The Illustrated London News Picture Library)

a step down when director D. W. Griffith hired her in 1909 to perform roles in one- and two-reel films. She averaged about 30 films per year at Biograph, Griffith's studio. Because the names of actors were not publicized by film companies, Pickford became known as the "girl with the curls" due to her long, golden locks. Her hits at Biograph included *With the Enemy's Help* (1912) and *New York Hat* (1912). Always skillful in business matters, Pickford realized that she could use her popularity to demand progressively higher salaries.

In 1914, following a brief return to the stage, Pickford joined Adolph Zukor's Famous Players. One of the biggest stars in Hollywood, she earned only slightly less than Charlie Chaplin. Pickford and her mother also forced Zukor to pay her half of the net profits from Famous Players films, guaranteed to be no less than \$1.04 million. For a woman in Hollywood, Pickford had unprecedented creative control. She had approval over directors

and actors as well as studio facilities designated only for use in her films. With this control, Pickford began to win critical as well as popular acclaim for her acting. She played yet another "poor but cheerful girl" in *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* (1917); but in *Stella Maris* (1918), Pickford began to show her considerable range, as she played both the beautiful, naive Stella and the misshapen scullery maid. The film is widely acclaimed as her best work.

Pickford married fellow actor and notorious drunk Owen Moore in 1910. Seven years later, she fell in love with the also-married and enormously popular actor Douglas Fairbanks Sr. The potential scandal threatened to derail both of their careers. When the couple eventually married in 1920, the public embraced them. The home that they established, Pickfair, became the social center of the Hollywood community. They divorced in 1932. Pickford married Buddy Rogers in 1927 and remained with him until her death.

Pickford joined with Fairbanks, Chaplin, and Griffith to form United Artists in 1919. The group had become dissatisfied with the assembly-line style of filmmaking.

They wanted creative control and, just as importantly, control over the distribution and marketing of their films. Pickford's business skills were critical in making United Artists into a success. She remained heavily involved with the company until she sold her stock in 1956.

Pickford successfully made the transition to sound films. She won an Academy Award for Best Actress for her first venture into sound, *Coquette* (1928). Now in her thirties and feeling boxed in by the Victorian characters she was continually asked to play, she sought out more adult roles. Her last film role came in *Secrets* (1933), which did poorly at the box office, leading her to retire from the screen. She remained in the movie business as a partner in United Artists, however. In 1935, Pickford published her somewhat fictionalized biography, *Sunshine and Shadow*. She received an honorary Oscar in 1976 and died on May 29, 1979, after years as a recluse.

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—Caryn E. Neumann

POITIER, SIDNEY. Sidney Poitier has been much more than just a film actor; he has been an influential figure in American cinema. In addition to starring in over 50 films, some of them seminal contributions to the industry, Poitier has also worked as a director and critic, and, later in his life, served as a humanitarian, diplomat, and author. A true Renaissance man, Poitier has helped to shape the perception of African Americans during a crucial period in U.S. history.

Born in 1927, in Miami, Florida, Poitier grew up on Cat Island and then in Nassau in the Bahamas. His father was a struggling tomato farmer, and his mother worked at home, raising Sidney and his six siblings. Poitier was introduced to the cinema as a young boy living in Nassau. Immediately struck by the possibilities offered through film, he dedicated himself to learning about the medium, and once he established himself in the industry, used his celebrity to make a positive impact on the world.

Poitier was a serious student of the stage. When he was just 16, he moved to New York and began working as a custodian at the American Negro Theater in exchange for acting classes. Eventually, Poitier was chosen as the understudy to Harry Belafonte, who was appearing in a production of *Days of Our Youth* at the theater. He subsequently landed a role in *Lysistrata*, which marked the beginning of his professional acting career. Poitier would return to the stage several times throughout his life, his most notable role being that of Walter Lee Younger in the Broadway production of *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959 and 1961).

In the 1950s, Poitier began his film career, quickly becoming known for playing characters with strong convictions. He made two of his most controversial and powerful films during this period: *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1952), which examined



In 1958 Sidney Poitier became the first African American to be nominated as Best Actor by the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences for his co-starring role in the Hollywood film *The Defiant Ones*. In 1963 he became only the second African American actor ever to win an Oscar, for his performance in the film *Lilies of the Field*. He is credited with paving the way for public acceptance of African American men in American films, and such contemporary film figures as Eddie Murphy and Spike Lee have him partially to thank for their huge success. (AFP/Getty Images)

apartheid in South Africa, and *The Defiant Ones* (1958), which explored the challenges faced by two escaped prisoners of different races. Poitier was nominated for his first Academy Award for the latter film, and five years later he won the Best Actor Oscar for his role in *Lilies of the Field* (1963)—he was the first African American man to win the coveted award.

Poitier starred in the screen adaptation of *A Raisin in the Sun* in 1961, and went on to appear in three important films that were released in 1967: *To Sir, with Love*; *In the Heat of the Night*; and *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*—the latter two films were nominated for 1968 Best Picture Academy Awards alongside *The Graduate*, *Bonnie and Clyde*, and *Doctor Dolittle*. During the 1970s, '80s, and '90s, Poitier stepped behind the camera, directing pictures such as the blaxploitation offering *Buck and the Preacher* (1972), and comedies such as *Uptown Saturday Night* (1974), *Stir Crazy* (1980), and *Ghost Dad* (1990). After a decade-long hiatus, he returned to the screen in 1988 to star in *Shoot to Kill*, in which he played an FBI agent. In 1997, he took on a role that dovetailed with his humanitarian interests, playing the South African anti-apartheid hero Nelson Mandela in the made-for-TV docudrama, *Mandela and de Klerk*.

Throughout his eclectic career, Sidney Poitier has been instrumental in helping to change many of the destructive racial stereotypes that have long existed in the United States. Moreover, thanks to the international popularity of his films and his wide-ranging humanitarian interests,

Poitier has given hope to and served as a role model for millions of oppressed people around the world. In recognition of his myriad achievements in the arts and as a humanitarian, Poitier was awarded a Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Barack Obama in 2009.

Selected Filmography

The Jackal (1997); *Sneakers* (1992); *Separate but Equal* (1991); *Little Nikita* (1988); *Shoot to Kill* (1988); *A Piece of the Action* (1977); *Let's Do It Again* (1975); *The Wilby Conspiracy* (1975); *Uptown Saturday Night* (1974); *A Warm December* (1973); *Buck and the Preacher* (1972); *The Organization* (1971); *Brother John* (1971); *They Call Me MISTER Tibbs!* (1970); *The Lost Man* (1969); *For Love of Ivy* (1968); *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (1967); *In the Heat of the Night* (1967); *To Sir, with Love* (1967); *Duel at Diablo* (1966); *The Slender Thread* (1965); *A Patch of Blue* (1965); *The Bedford Incident* (1965); *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (1965); *The Long Ships* (1964); *Lilies of the Field* (1963); *Pressure Point* (1962); *Paris Blues* (1961); *A Raisin in the Sun* (1961); *All the Young Men* (1960); *Porgy and Bess* (1959); *The Defiant Ones* (1958); *The Mark of the Hawk* (1957); *Band of Angels* (1957); *Something of Value* (1957); *Edge of the City* (1957); *Good-bye, My Lady* (1956); *Go, Man, Go!* (1954); *Red Ball Express* (1952); *Cry, the Beloved Country* (1952); *No Way Out* (1950)

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—Jen Westmoreland Bouchard

POLANSKI, ROMAN. Director Roman Polanski has left his imprint on the silver screen by creating filmic characters that are often caught in intensely claustrophobic and unfamiliar settings. Known as much for the personal turmoil that he has suffered, Polanski has become an enigmatic figure in American cinema.

Born August 18, 1933, in Paris to Polish parents, Polanski was taken to Krakow when he was just three years old. By 1940, the family home had become part of the larger Krakow ghetto that had been created by German soldiers at the start of World War II. Shortly after this, his parents, both Jews, were taken to concentration camps. Polanski escaped the ghetto and survived the war thanks to Catholic peasant families who harbored him. Polanski's mother died in Auschwitz; his father survived.

After the war, Polanski grew into a budding actor and director; he was eventually accepted into the prestigious State Film School at Lodz in 1954. He studied the dark, character-driven dramas directed by Orson Welles, whom Polanski claims as his film-making inspiration (Vezzoli, 2009). Polanski directed short films while in school and



Polish-born filmmaker Roman Polanski, husband of slain actress Sharon Tate, is seen in this 1970 photo. (AP/Wide World Photos)

also after he graduated. He gained international attention with his first feature film, *Knife in the Water* (1962). Restricted in his filmmaking pursuits by Polish Communist authorities, he relocated to France and England.

Polanski burst onto the U.S. film scene in 1968 with *Rosemary's Baby*. The picture, starring Mia Farrow and John Cassavetes, tells the story of a woman who gives birth to the devil's child. Polanski was nominated for an Oscar for Best Adapted Screenplay. That same year, Polanski married actress Sharon Tate, who had appeared in his 1967 film *The Fearless Vampire Killers*. Tragedy struck in 1969, when, while he was working in London, members of the Charles Manson cult entered his Los Angeles home and killed Sharon, their unborn baby, and four of the couple's friends. Devastated by the tragic experience, Polanski made a number of mediocre films in the early 1970s. He reestablished himself as one of the most important filmmakers in Hollywood with *Chinatown* in 1974. The picture, starring Jack Nicholson and Faye Dunaway, earned Polanski a Golden Globe Award and an Oscar nomination for Best Director.

In 1977, Polanski's personal life once again took the spotlight. He admitted to having sex with a 13-year-old girl and later pleaded guilty to one count of having sexual relations with a minor. He spent several weeks in prison undergoing psychiatric evaluation. The night before he was to be sentenced, Polanski, who had been released pending the court's decision on his case, fled to Europe, where he has remained in exile from the United States (Wakeman, 1987). Making his home in Paris, Polanski took a short break from filmmaking before returning to the screen with an adaptation of Thomas

Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* in 1979; the film would bring him another Best Director nomination. He won both critical and box-office acclaim with 1988's *Frantic*, starring Harrison Ford, and once again provided audiences with a troubled protagonist plagued by isolation and paranoia in *Death and the Maiden* (1994).

The highlight of Polanski's late career came in 2003, when he made *The Pianist*. The movie is based on the memoir of Wladyslaw Szpilman, a successful Jewish-Polish pianist living through the early years of World War II. Szpilman, played by Adrien Brody, is forced into a Warsaw ghetto but manages to hide from German soldiers. The picture finally earned Polanski the much-coveted Best Director Oscar, although he was unable to travel to the United States to collect it; it also won the Palme d'Or at Cannes.

Questions about Polanski's 1977 charges resurfaced in 2008, when documentary filmmaker Marina Zenovich released *Roman Polanski: Wanted and Desired*. The film raised questions about whether or not Polanski received a fair trial. Polanski's lawyers have asked that the charges be dropped, which would allow him to return to the United States; as late as 2009, however, their requests have been denied (Cieply, 2009). Polanski continues to live in Paris, now with his second wife, Emmanuelle Seigner, and their two children; he remains actively involved in filmmaking.

Selected Filmography

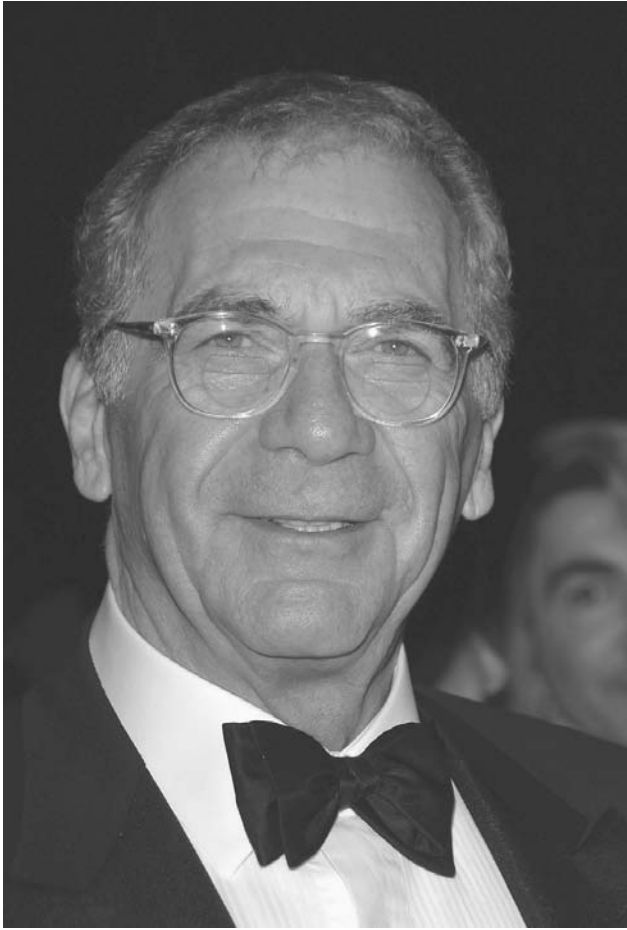
The Ghost Writer (2010); *Oliver Twist* (2005); *The Pianist* (2002); *The Ninth Gate* (1999); *Death and the Maiden* (1994); *Bitter Moon* (1992); *Frantic* (1988); *Pirates* (1986); *Tess* (1979); *The Tenant* (1976); *Chinatown* (1974); *What?* (1972); *Macbeth* (1971); *Rosemary's Baby* (1968); *The Fearless Vampire Killers* (1967); *Cul-de-sac* (1966); *Repulsion* (1965); *Knife in the Water* (1962)

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—Rachael Hanel

POLLACK, SYDNEY. Sydney Irwin Pollack, born July 1, 1934, in Lafayette, Indiana, developed a love of drama while he was in high school and eventually enrolled at the Neighborhood Playhouse School of the Theatre in New York City, rather than go to college. He studied under Sanford Meisner for two years and then took up the post of teaching assistant, which he held for five years. Pollack had a brief flirtation



Portrait of 20th-century film director Sydney Pollack. (Getty Images)

with Broadway stage-acting when he was young, and would go on to establish himself as a successful character actor in Hollywood films. At the suggestion of Burt Lancaster, however, whom he had met while acting in John Frankenheimer's *Playhouse 90* telecasts in 1959, he turned to directing in 1965. Lancaster introduced Pollack to the entertainment mogul Lew Wasserman, who in turn found Pollack a directing job on the television series *Shotgun Slade*. Pollack went on to direct episodes of celebrated television series, such as *The Fugitive*, and won an Emmy in 1966 for an episode of *Bob Hope Presents the Chrysler Theatre*.

In 1965, Pollack made his directorial film debut with *The Slender Thread*, starring Anne Bancroft and Sidney Poitier. Four years after this, he won his first Academy Award nomination for Best Director, for *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* (1969), a Depression-era tale of love and death. The first of many literary adaptations on which Pollack

would work, *Horses* starred Jane Fonda and was nominated for nine Academy Awards, with Gig Young winning for Best Supporting Actor. Although he did not earn the coveted Best Director Oscar for *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?*, Pollack's work on this film did not go unrecognized, as he was awarded the Directors' Guild of America Award for Outstanding Directorial Achievement in Feature Film; he would also win this award for *Tootsie* (1982) and *Out of Africa* (1985).

After forging a firm friendship with Robert Redford, whom Pollack had met when the actor made his screen debut in *War Hunt* (1962), he went on to direct Redford in numerous films, including *Jeremiah Johnson* (1972), *The Way We Were* (1973) and *Out of Africa*. When filming *Jeremiah Johnson*, about a flatlander who leaves his life behind and becomes a "mountain man," Pollack battled with Warner Bros. executives to be allowed to shoot on location. He won the argument, and the studio allowed him to film in Utah; they issued the proviso, however, that he was not to spend a penny

more than if he were shooting on a studio lot in Hollywood. Despite the difficulties of filming high in the snow-covered peaks of Utah, *Jeremiah Johnson* proved a success for Pollack, grossing over \$22 million. It also established him as a director who, while committed to making commercially successful pictures, was still willing to wrangle with studio executives in order to maintain the artistic integrity of his films. Although critics were less than enthusiastic about *The Way We Were*, the engaging romance, which paired Redford with Barbra Streisand, was warmly received by audiences. Once again nominated as Best Director for *Tootsie*, Pollack would win his only Academy Award for direction three years later for *Out of Africa*, a lushly romantic literary adaptation, which this time paired Redford with Meryl Streep.

Tootsie was important to Pollack's career for any number of reasons. Plagued by on-set conflicts between Pollack and lead actor Dustin Hoffman, the project fell behind schedule and went over budget. Hoffman, who was powerful enough to be demanding by the time he was cast as Tootsie, insisted that the picture should be shot as a broadly comic look at a struggling actor; Pollack, however, argued that the focus of the film should be on the ill-fated romance between Tootsie and Julie Nichols, played by Jessica Lange. Fortunately, Pollack prevailed, and in his hands, *Tootsie* became a tender, heart-warming look at love, loss, and redemption. The film also became a critical and box-office success, garnering 10 Academy Award nominations—Lange would win for Best Supporting Actress—and taking in \$177 million in the United States alone.

Pollack would never again achieve the success he had enjoyed with *Tootsie* and *Out of Africa*. Although he made popular films such as *The Firm* (1993), adapted from John Grisham's runaway bestseller of the same name and starring Tom Cruise, offerings such as *Sabrina* (1995) and *Random Hearts* (1999), both of which starred Harrison Ford, were not embraced by audiences. By the 1990s, younger audiences, whose members preferred special-effects-laden extravaganzas, generally turned away from Pollack's more character-driven films. Seeking to continue to make high-quality pictures, Pollack united with Anthony Minghella to create the production company Mirage Enterprises. Mirage eventually backed the Minghella-directed *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (1999) and *Cold Mountain* (2003). Both were literary adaptations starring major movie stars, and both earned multiple Academy Award nominations. Other critical successes for the company included *The Quiet American* (2002), *Michael Clayton* (2007), and *The Reader* (2008).

In his later years, Pollack became an elder statesman of the film industry; in 2000, he was honored with the John Huston Award by the Directors Guild of America as a leading advocate for film artists' rights. Pollack died from cancer on May 26, 2008; he was posthumously nominated for an Academy Award for producing *The Reader*.

Selected Filmography

Sketches of Frank Gehry (2005); *The Interpreter* (2005); *Random Hearts* (1999); *Sabrina* (1995); *The Firm* (1993); *Havana* (1990); *Out of Africa* (1985); *Tootsie* (1982); *Absence of Malice* (1981); *The Electric Horseman* (1979); *Bobby Deerfield* (1977); *Three Days of the Condor* (1975); *The Yakuza* (1974); *The Way We Were* (1973); *Jeremiah Johnson* (1972); *They Shoot Horses, Don't*

They? (1969); *Castle Keep* (1969); *The Scalphunters* (1968); *This Property Is Condemned* (1966); *The Slender Thread* (1965)

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—Victoria Williams

PREMINGER, OTTO. Otto Preminger was an innovative and pioneering Austrian-American filmmaker active during the middle part of the twentieth century. One of the first great independent producer-directors of Hollywood, he was known for his unique film style, one that consistently challenged established industry practices.

Preminger's birth was a case in contradiction. Two sets of documents exist. One states that he was born in Vienna, on December 5, 1905, while another lists his grandfather's farm in Austria one year later on the same day (Wilson, 1987). Despite this, Preminger enjoyed a happy middle-class childhood and was close to his father, Markus Preminger—a prominent chief prosecutor for the government and military (highly unusual positions for a Jew in Austria at this time). The father wanted the son to follow in his footsteps, but instead Otto turned to the theatre with an apprenticeship under Max Reinhardt at the Josephstadt Theatre in Vienna. For the next decade, Preminger acted and directed in productions in Vienna, Prague, and Zurich before eventually returning to Vienna as an assistant director in 1931. It was also during this time that he made his directorial debut in film with *Die Grosse Liebe* (*The Great Love*, 1931) (Philips, 1998).

In 1935, Preminger's career changed course when he was interviewed in Vienna by Joseph Schenck of Twentieth Century-Fox. Preminger would later state that his decision to move to the United States had more to do with an "old dream" he had rather than the rising Nazi influence in Central Europe. Regardless of the reason, Preminger landed in New York in October 1936, and worked briefly on Broadway before moving to Hollywood.

Preminger's initial time at Fox was brief. His first film, *Under Your Spell* (1936), was a minor musical comedy. It was while directing *Danger, Love at Work* (1937) that he began to butt heads with Darryl F. Zanuck. The conflict peaked during the production of *Kidnapped*, when the two men engaged in a shouting match that ended with Preminger being fired and told that he would never direct in Hollywood again.

Exiled from Hollywood, Preminger returned to Broadway, where he became the "resident Nazi" in plays such as *Margin for Error* and *The Pied Piper*. It was his work,



Austrian-born film director Otto Preminger poses before a model of the set for the drama he's re-producing and staging, *Full Circle*, in 1973. (AP/Wide World Photos)

however, in *Margin for Error* that led to his return to Twentieth Century-Fox to direct a film version in 1943. For the remainder of the decade, Preminger was a prominent Hollywood director, helming two major noir pictures, *Laura* (1944) and *Fallen Angel* (1945), which stand out as major works in the genre. He did a number of other movies for Fox during this period, including his only western—and last film for Fox—*River of No Return* in 1954.

In 1953 (after starring as the camp commandant in Billy Wilder's *Stalag 17*), Preminger became an independent producer-director. He assaulted Hollywood's rigid censorship rules in a series of films. *The Moon Is Blue* (1953), for instance, dealt with virginity and seduction and

proved controversial because it used forbidden words such as “pregnant,” “seduce,” and “virgin”; shocking for the time, his 1954 film *Carmen* starred an all-black cast; and *The Man with the Golden Arm* (1955) focused on the volatile issue of drug addiction, graphically portraying the lead character, played by Frank Sinatra, attempting to break his heroin habit cold turkey. Pushing the censorship limits even further with *Anatomy of a Murder* (1959), Preminger became the first director to deal uncompromisingly with the topic of rape in a major film. A powerful courtroom drama, *Anatomy*, like *The Moon is Full*, proved controversial for its use of racy language, most notably “sperm” and “penetration.”

Preminger also focused on national institutions in his films. *The Court Martial of Billy Mitchell* (1955), for instance, focused on the Army's case against the famous World War I general, while the realism of naval warfare was reflected in his 1965 film *In Harm's Way*. The church came under scrutiny in *The Cardinal* (1963), while the relationship among politics, religion, and the Holocaust was explored in Preminger's epic 1960 film *Exodus*. The issue of having and raising a child out of wedlock was

dramatically portrayed in *Bunny Lake Is Missing* (1965), and in *Advise & Consent* (1962), Preminger fused his interest in social institutions and taboo topics by portraying a battle between the president and the Senate underscored with questions of homosexuality (until this time an issue largely avoided in film).

Preminger's last major film, *The Human Factor* (1979), while not considered one of his best, serves as a reflection of what was a diverse, controversial, and influential career. He died of cancer in New York on April 23, 1986.

Selected Filmography

The Human Factor (1979); *Rosebud* (1975); *Such Good Friends* (1971); *Tell Me That You Love Me*, *Junie Moon* (1970); *Skidoo* (1968); *Hurry Sundown* (1967); *Bunny Lake Is Missing* (1965); *In Harm's Way* (1965); *The Cardinal* (1963); *Advise & Consent* (1962); *Exodus* (1960); *Anatomy of a Murder* (1959); *Porgy and Bess* (1959); *Bonjour Tristesse* (1958); *Saint Joan* (1957); *The Court-Martial of Billy Mitchell* (1955); *The Man with the Golden Arm* (1955); *Carmen Jones* (1954); *River of No Return* (1954); *The Moon Is Blue* (1953); *Angel Face* (1952); *The 13th Letter* (1951); *Where the Sidewalk Ends* (1950); *Whirlpool* (1949); *The Fan* (1949); *That Lady in Ermine* (1948); *Daisy Kenyon* (1947); *Forever Amber* (1947); *Centennial Summer* (1946); *Fallen Angel* (1945); *A Royal Scandal* (1945); *Laura* (1944); *In the Meantime, Darling* (1944); *Margin for Error* (1943)

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—Charles Johnson

RAY, NICHOLAS. Born Raymond Nicholas Kienzle in Galesville, Wisconsin, on August 7, 1911, Nicholas Ray is best known for directing the film *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955). Although he is little remembered by most moviegoers, many contemporary directors and filmmakers, including Martin Scorsese and Jim Jarmusch, credit Ray as an important influence. As French director Jean-Luc Godard wrote, “Cinema is Nicholas Ray.”

Ray spent a short time in Chicago, New York City, and Mexico, as well as some months working with Frank Lloyd Wright in the early 1930s, before settling in New York City and joining the left-wing theater movement there. After several years with the Theater of Action, Ray became theater director for the Socialist, union-run university Brookwood Labor College. By 1937, however, Ray was working for the New Deal Resettlement Administration running the theater arts division in which he organized community theaters and taught people to present their stories in theatrical terms. In 1940, Ray took over production of *Back Where I Came From*, a folk music radio show. After the U.S. entry into WWII, he went to work for the Office of War Information (OWI) producing folk music and propaganda shows for *Voice of America* radio. Ray did not move into film until 1944, when he went to Hollywood to work with director Elia Kazan on *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*. Ray worked on various film and early TV projects with John Houseman, former director of the OWI. Houseman hired him as his assistant at RKO, and put Ray to work adapting the novel *Thieves Like Us*. Ray directed the film, his first feature (retitled *They Live by Night*), in 1947, but it was not released until 1949.

During his tenure with RKO, Ray directed six feature films, including *Flying Leathernecks* (1951) and *On Dangerous Ground* (1952). His connection with Howard Hughes saved him, in spite of his leftist politics, from the blacklisting that killed so many careers in the early 1950s, and when Hughes left RKO, Ray, ever uncomfortable in the studio system, wriggled out of his contract, as well. After leaving RKO, Ray bounced from one studio to another, directing, among other films, the noirish western *Johnny Guitar* in 1954.

Ray's career highpoint came in 1955 when he made *Rebel Without a Cause* for Warner Bros. Although initially uninterested in directing a movie that focused on

juvenile delinquency, a topic very much in vogue at the time, he became intrigued with the project as he began to envision the main characters as neither psychopaths nor particularly “at risk” children, but rather as perfectly normal kids. During filming, Natalie Wood, then only 16, had an affair with Ray, and later with Dennis Hopper, who played a gang member in the picture. But the more surprising sexual tension in the film comes in the character of Plato, who may or may not have been written as the first openly gay teenager. Ray himself was bisexual, having had various affairs with men in addition to his four marriages.

Ray was fundamentally dissatisfied with the Hollywood studio system; he and James Dean had planned to create a production company that would have freed both men from it. Unfortunately, Dean died in a tragic car accident on September 30, 1955. Devastated, Ray never recovered from the psychological effects of the accident—personally, artistically, or professionally. He bounced between the United States and Europe during the 1960s and ’70s, finally dying of cancer on June 16, 1979. He had struggled for years with drug addiction, alcoholism, and obsessive gambling, at times virtually homeless and economically dependent on those who continued to admire his work.

Selected Filmography

Lightning over Water (1980); *Marco* (1978); *We Can't Go Home Again* (1976); *55 Days at Peking* (1963); *King of Kings* (1961); *The Savage Innocents* (1960); *Party Girl* (1958); *Wind across the Everglades* (1958); *Bitter Victory* (1957); *The True Story of Jesse James* (1957); *Bigger Than Life* (1956); *Hot Blood* (1956); *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955); *Run for Cover* (1955); *Johnny Guitar* (1954); *The Lusty Men* (1952); *On Dangerous Ground* (1952); *Flying Leathernecks* (1951); *Born to Be Bad* (1950); *In a Lonely Place* (1950); *They Live by Night* (1949); *Knock on Any Door* (1949)

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—Molly K. B. Varley

ROBESON, PAUL. Paul Robeson, who made his mark on the nascent movie industry by portraying strong African American characters, became increasingly political throughout his life to the point where his communist beliefs derailed his entertainment career in the United States.

Robeson was born April 9, 1898, in Princeton, New Jersey, the youngest of eight children. His mother died of burns sustained in a household accident when he was



Paul Robeson, world-famous stage and film performer, leads workers in singing “The Star-Spangled Banner” at the Moore shipyard in Oakland, California, in September 1942. Robeson entertained Allied forces during World War II. (National Archives)

six, and he was subsequently raised by his pastor father. Robeson’s high grades earned him a scholarship to Rutgers College, where he was the third African American student in the school’s history (Paul Robeson, 1976). At Rutgers, he displayed immense athletic talent as a member of the football, baseball, track, and basketball teams. Robeson graduated in 1919.

He moved to Harlem, New York, and parlayed his excellent oratorical skills into theatrical roles. In 1920, Robeson acted in his first play, *Simon the Cyrenian*. At the same time, he continued his academic career by entering Columbia Law School, from which he graduated in 1923. He worked briefly as a lawyer but resigned because of the lack of opportunity and respect provided to African Americans in that field.

From that point on, Robeson focused entirely on entertainment. With his booming, rich baritone voice, his singing career soared. He and a friend, pianist Lawrence Brown, made recordings and went on tour. Robeson also continued his stage work. In 1924, he debuted what would become one of his signature roles: Brutus Jones in *The Emperor Jones*. The play took him to London. In Europe, Robeson and his wife, Essie, marveled at the warm welcome they received even though they were African Americans.

In 1928, Robeson played another of his signature roles, Joe, in a London production of *Show Boat*. He sang “Ol’ Man River,” a song that audiences would identify with him for generations. He also played the title role in a London production of *Othello* in 1930, a role he would later reprise on Broadway in 1943. In the late 1920s and early

1930s, Robeson transferred his acting and singing talents to the movie industry. He starred in film versions of his theatrical work: *The Emperor Jones* (1933) and *Show Boat* (1936). Robeson declined roles that portrayed African Americans in stereotypical fashion, instead favoring strong, intellectual characters.

In 1933, Robeson performed a benefit play for Jewish refugees, which he said was the beginning of his political activism (Stewart, 1998). He also visited Russia several times, impressed with the gains earned by that country's minorities. He enrolled his son in Soviet schools, hoping Paul Jr. would escape the racial discrimination that was so rampant in the United States.

Robeson voluntarily ended his movie career with 1942's *Tales of Manhattan*. Displeased with the final cut, he claimed that the picture portrayed poor, black sharecroppers in a demeaning light. He announced that he would no longer work in an industry that did not offer well-rounded roles for African Americans (Stewart, 1998). Robeson put other restrictions on his career. He announced in 1942 that he would not perform at venues that demanded audiences be segregated. In 1947, he ended concert performances altogether, saying that he would only sing for unions and for college friends (Stewart, 1998).

He did not keep his communist views secret, and support for his career in the United States waned. On August 27, 1949, rioters injured several people before one of his concerts, and it was cancelled. Robeson finally performed on September 4, but a melee after the show injured 140 people (Stewart, 1998).

In 1950, the State Department revoked Robeson's passport, declaring that his travels abroad were not in the best interests of the United States. Officials would return the passport if Robeson signed an affidavit denying that he was a communist. He refused. For eight years, the case languished in the courts. The inability to perform overseas significantly harmed his career. The passport restrictions were finally lifted in 1958, and Robeson immediately left the United States. He performed as Othello in London. But his health declined, and he spent several months in and out of hospitals and sanatoriums.

Robeson returned to the United States in 1963, but retreated mostly to private life. He gave speeches and attended benefit dinners, but did not perform. In 1973, a "Salute to Paul Robeson" packed Carnegie Hall on his 75th birthday. Robeson was too ill to attend. He died on January 23, 1976, at the age of 77.

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—Rachael Hanel

SARRIS, ANDREW. Andrew Sarris, considered by many the most influential critic in American film history, was born on October 31, 1928, in Brooklyn, New York. Sarris received his BA and MA from Columbia University, and was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Emerson College in Boston, in 2008. He has taught at Columbia, Juilliard, Yale, and New York University. Sarris has worked extensively as a film critic and commentator in various media. He edited *Cahiers du cinéma* between 1965 and 1967 and worked as a film critic for the *Village Voice* from 1960 until 1989; since 1989, Sarris has been writing criticism for the *New York Observer*. A member of the Society of Cinema Studies and of the American Film Institute, Sarris also served on the editorial board of the *Journal of Popular Film and Television* and was a founding member and chairman of the National Society of Film Critics.

Sarris has written several books, including a seminal work on film studies, *The American Cinema: Directors and Directions, 1929–1968*. Other of his books include *The Films of Josef von Sternberg*; *The St. James Film Director's Encyclopedia*; *Hollywood Voices: Interviews with Film Directors*; *Confessions of a Cultist: On the Cinema, 1955–1969*; *The Primal Screen: Essays on Film and Related Subjects*; *Politics and Cinema*; and *You Ain't Heard Nothing Yet: The American Talking Film, History, and Memory 1927–1949*. Sarris's work has had an impact on every aspect of the film world. Indeed, his alternative history of American movies made viewers and readers aware of the real artistic value of American cinema.

Sarris imported to the United States the post-WWII French notion that the director was the author of a film. Labeled *la politique des auteurs* in the 1950s by French film critics André Bazin, Erich Rohmer, Jean-Luc Godard, Jacques Rivette, and François Truffaut—the last four also directors—in the avant-garde film journal *Cahiers du Cinéma*, auteur theory was adopted in the United States during the early 1960s. Sarris introduced the notions of the auteur and *mise-en-scène*—literally to “place in the scene,” related to the idea of framing the filmic image—into the critical discourse on cinema that was emerging in America at the time. In an extremely important essay titled “Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962,” Sarris discussed the importance of the director in creating a film; he also set down a list of what he took to be the preeminent

directors of the “first century” of filmmaking, many of whom, interestingly, were Americans, and all of whom were men: Max Ophüls, Jean Renoir, Kenji Mizoguchi, Alfred Hitchcock, Charlie Chaplin, John Ford, Orson Welles, Carl Theodore Dreyer, Roberto Rossellini, F. W. Murnau, D. W. Griffith, Joseph von Sternberg, Sergei Eisenstein, Erich von Stroheim, Luis Buñuel, Robert Bresson, Howard Hawks, Fritz Lang, Robert Flaherty, and Jean Vigo. “In time,” suggested Sarris in “Notes on the Auteur Theory,”

some of these auteurs will rise, some will fall, and some will be displaced either by new directors or rediscovered ancients. Again, the exact order is less important than the specific definitions of these and as many as two hundred other potential auteurs. I would hardly expect any other critic in the world fully to endorse this list, especially on faith. Only after thousands of films have been reevaluated, will any personal pantheon have a reasonably objective validity. The task of validating the auteur theory is an enormous one, and the end will never be in sight. Meanwhile, the auteur habit of collecting random films in directorial bundles will serve posterity with at least a tentative classification. (Baudy and Cohen, 1999)

Following the guidelines laid out by the *Cahiers* critics who first articulated the *politique des auteurs*, Sarris laid out three criteria that he believed could be used to distinguish an auteur from other, pedestrian directors. The first criterion defined what Sarris called “the outer circle.” This implied that the auteur possessed knowledge of the technical end of filmmaking—related to the idea of *mise-en-scène*, he was literally a *metteur-en-scène*, a “placer of the scene,” who was able to employ a specific, generally recurrent style in his work. The second criterion defined a “middle circle,” the explicit personal style or “stylistic consistency” of a filmmaker. In contrast to average directors, whose skills are largely dependent upon their working within a system of filmmaking, the auteur is able to infuse his work with a certain discernable artistic personality by way of his unique treatment of the filmic material. Sarris even went so far as to argue that the “stylistic consistency” of certain American directors—Welles and Hitchcock, for example—often made them superior to foreign directors.

The third criterion set down by Sarris defined an “inner circle,” or “interior meaning,” that resulted from “the tension between a director’s personality and his material.” Sarris’s notion of interior meaning is complicated, at best—in fact it is not altogether clear exactly what he means by the phrase—but he nevertheless suggests that it represents the “ultimate glory of the cinema as an art.” Basically, “interior meaning” seems to define a complex conglomerate of constituting elements that interact: technical competence, artistic talent, and presence of spirit; as well as the sum of communicative skills and other spontaneous attitudes a director needs to overcome diverse obstacles during the often convoluted process of filmmaking.

Significantly, auteur theory was sharply criticized by the highly regarded American film critic Pauline Kael. In a review titled “Circle and Squares,” which appeared in *Film Quarterly* in 1963, Kael questioned Sarris’s central idea concerning the supremacy of the director in the filmmaking process—especially the uniquely male film director—arguing that the auteur theory, with its rigid formulation, obscured the collaborative

nature of filmmaking. Contemporary theories of the filmic auteur, while still according an elevated status to certain directors, have sought to decenter the totalitarian notion of the director as dictatorial author and to replace the male-dominated, monolithic view of the auteur with the more inclusive concept of the auteur function. Although controversial, Sarris's auteur theory did succeed in drawing attention to little-known directors and their films.

In 2001, Scarecrow Press published a collection of 39 essays in Andrew Sarris's honor entitled *Citizen Sarris, American Film Critic*. Sarris lives in New York City with his wife, Molly Haskell, who is also a film critic and scholar.

See also: Auteur Theory; Film Criticism; French New Wave; Truffaut, François

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—Réka M. Cristian

SCHOONMAKER, THELMA. One of the most recognizable motion picture editors of our time, Thelma Schoonmaker has been in the film industry for over 30 years. Her longtime partnership with director Martin Scorsese has helped shape her acclaimed career. She has edited every one of Scorsese's feature films since *Raging Bull*, and has been recognized by the American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (Academy Awards), Emmy Awards, American Cinema Editors, British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA), and other highly regarded organizations in the industry.

Schoonmaker was born in Algiers, Algeria, on January 3, 1940. She spent most of her childhood in Aruba, and as a teenager, her parents, who were originally from the United States, moved to New Jersey. Later, she attended Cornell University, where she studied political science and Russian. Her goal was to be a diplomat, but upon graduating in 1961, she interviewed with the Foreign Service and was told that she was not suited for diplomatic service. Instead, she decided to enroll at Columbia



Thelma Schoonmaker poses with the Oscar for achievement in film editing for her work on *The Departed* during the 79th Academy Awards, February 25, 2007. (AP/Wide World Photos)

University to study primitive art, which she still considers a hobby. In looking for employment opportunities to pay the bills, she responded to a classified ad in the *New York Times* advertising a position for an assistant film editor trainee. She was hired for the position, and this resulted in her decision to enroll in a six-week course in film editing at New York University (NYU). It was during this time that she met Scorsese. The six-week course turned out to be the only formal training in film editing she ever received.

Schoonmaker's collaboration with Scorsese would not begin until many years later. Her first attempt at film editing was in 1965, when she signed on to edit *Finnegan's Wake*, directed by Mary Ellen Bute. After that attempt, she continued to experiment and form her now distinctive style by editing commercials, industrial films, and short films about celebrities for *The Merv*

Griffin Show. Her first encounter with Scorsese—other than when she helped save a short film he had made after another editor had done a horrible job cutting it—came in 1968, when she helped edit his first feature film, *Who's That Knocking on My Door?*

Her first big break in the industry came when she worked with fellow NYU student, Michael Wadleigh, editing and acting as assistant director on the 1970 documentary *Woodstock*. Eschewing orthodox methods for presenting the 1969 concert on-screen, Schoonmaker and Wadleigh experimented with the use of split screens, freeze frames, and other disjointed and fluid techniques in an attempt to capture the mood and feel of the iconic Woodstock Music Festival. Although the film's distributor, Warner Bros., had concerns about releasing the nontraditional concert documentary, *Woodstock* received a great deal of critical acclaim and was embraced by audiences. Based on her work on the film, Schoonmaker received the first of her six Academy Award nominations for editing. The nomination also marked the first time a documentary was recognized in the Academy's film editing category.

Ironically, Schoonmaker was unable to join the Motion Picture Editors Guild at this point in her career, as she had not gone through the normal process of training as an apprentice and slowly working her way up to the position of film editor. There was also the fact that the exclusive guild was predominantly an old boys' network. Naturally, Schoonmaker felt that she was more than qualified to edit feature films, especially after having been nominated for an Academy Award. Unfortunately, her lack of formal training and gender prevented her from editing such early Scorsese films as *Mean Streets* (1973) and *Taxi Driver* (1976). Her patient stand eventually paid off, however, and she was finally admitted to the editor's union. This allowed her to collaborate with Scorsese on his seminal 1981 film *Raging Bull*. Both Scorsese and Schoonmaker received enormous critical acclaim for their work on the film—Scorsese was nominated as Best Director and Schoonmaker for Editing Achievement, with Schoonmaker taking home her first Oscar.

In addition to editing Scorsese's films, she also edited the music video for Michael Jackson's *Bad*, which Scorsese directed, and worked with other directors on the following films: *Rockshow* (1980), *Grace of My Heart* (1996), and *The McCartney Years* (2007).

This collaboration between Scorsese and Schoonmaker not only produced Academy Award-winning films, but also led to Schoonmaker meeting the love of her life, Michael Powell. Powell, whom Schoonmaker married in 1984, and with whom she lived happily until his death in 1990, was a British filmmaker who was one of Scorsese's inspirations. He had directed classics such as *Black Narcissus* (1947) and *The Red Shoes* (1948), and in the late 1970s, Scorsese brought him to the United States. Since Powell's death, Schoonmaker has devoted a great deal of her time working to preserve and promote Powell's films and writings in order to keep his legacy alive.

To date, Schoonmaker has been nominated for six Academy Awards for Editing Achievement. In addition to being nominated for her work on *Woodstock* and *Raging Bull*, she was also nominated for editing *Goodfellas*, *Gangs of New York*, *The Aviator*, and *The Departed*. In addition to *Raging Bull*, she won Oscars for *The Aviator* and *The Departed*.

See also: De Niro, Robert; *Goodfellas*; *Raging Bull*; Scorsese, Martin

Selected Filmography

Shutter Island (2010); *The Departed* (2006); *The Aviator* (2004); *Gangs of New York* (2002); *Bringing Out the Dead* (1999); *My Voyage to Italy* (1999); *Kundun* (1997); *Grace of My Heart* (1996); *Casino* (1995); *The Age of Innocence* (1993); *Cape Fear* (1991); *Goodfellas* (1990); *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988); *The Color of Money* (1986); *After Hours* (1985); *The King of Comedy* (1982); *Raging Bull* (1980); *Woodstock* (1970); *Who's That Knocking at My Door?* (1967); *Passages from James Joyce's Finnegans Wake* (1966)

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—Tinamarie Vella

SCORSESE, MARTIN. While his name is synonymous with Italian American New York culture, Martin Scorsese's impact reaches beyond the boundaries of the Big Apple, as his directorial portfolio contains biographical and historical pieces that explore complex figures and groups as diverse as the Dalai Lama, Howard Hughes, Bob Dylan, the American Mafia, Jake La Motta, and Jesus Christ.

Growing up in New York City, Scorsese's love for film grew out of necessity, as asthma kept him from enjoying most outdoor activities. He attributes his education to film and television, as his parents kept no books or magazines around the house (AFI, 2000). Living in Italian American neighborhoods, Scorsese experienced a stark contrast between authority figures—wise guys and Catholic priests. Interestingly, as he grew up, Scorsese, although drawn toward the wise guys, thought seriously about becoming a priest. Though he obviously joined neither group, his fascination with both shines through in his films.

Scorsese went to college at New York University, working under Professor Haig Manoogian (Kelly, 1980). It was at NYU that his career as a writer/director really began. While there, he produced three short pieces: *What's a Nice Girl Like You Doing in a Place Like This?* (1963), *It's Not Just You Murray!* (1964), and *The Big Shave* (1967). His first feature film, *Who's That Knocking at My Door?* (1967), also made while he was studying at NYU, explores personal struggles with spirituality and Italian American misogyny—themes that would become paramount in his later work. Scorsese earned an MFA in film and taught at NYU in the late 1960s, as the turmoil of the war in Vietnam came to a head. He made his antiwar sentiments known in his films, most notably in *The Big Shave* (1967), also titled *Viet '67*, which depicts a man shaving his face until it is a bloody mess. He also directed his first documentary of note during this period, *Street Scenes* (1970), which chronicles antiwar rallies in Washington, D.C., and New York City.

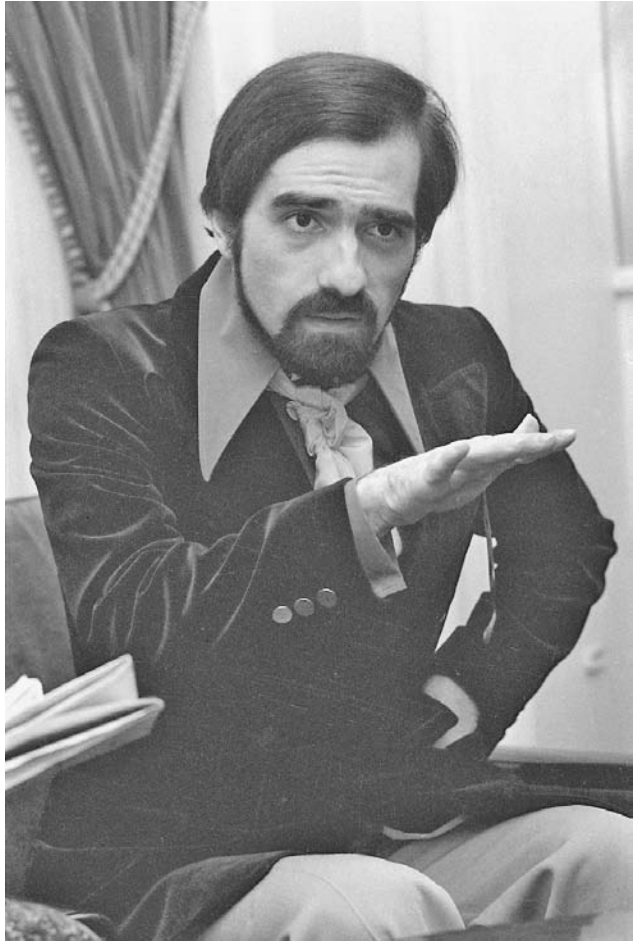
The success of *Who's That Knocking at My Door?* inspired Scorsese to move to Hollywood, where he worked with influential and innovative filmmakers such as Roger Corman and John Cassavetes. It was Corman who took a chance on Scorsese, hiring him to direct his first Hollywood film, *Boxcar Bertha* (1972). Dissatisfied with the original treatment for the picture, which did not fit well with his own cinematic style, Scorsese altered the script significantly, adding a fast-talking New York City con man and heightening the metaphor of the male protagonist as a Christlike figure (LoBrutto, 2008). Even with these changes, *Boxcar Bertha* was unsuccessful, and Scorsese returned to his urban roots with a follow-up to *Who's That Knocking at My Door?* called *Mean Streets* (1973). Like his previous neighborhood films, this picture probed Italian American male camaraderie in Little Italy. While his early films are all woven through with ethical threads, *Mean Streets* went so far as to depict the Catholic Church as an ever-watchful, moral specter hanging over the heads of its wise-guy characters.

The film met with critical acclaim, and its gritty portrayal of small-time, neighborhood criminals stood in marked contrast to the spectacle of Francis Ford Coppola's *Godfather*, which was released around the same time.

Capitalizing on the success of *Mean Streets*, Scorsese was able to choose his next project, the road story *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* (1974). Though it departed from the avant-garde style Scorsese was developing, the picture was very well received, earning an Oscar for Ellen Burstyn and inspiring a spin-off television sitcom. For Scorsese, the picture laid the groundwork for an ambitious run of experimental productions in the late 1970s and early 1980s that spanned a range of genres: documentary, musical, biography, comedy, and neo-noir thriller.

Perhaps the two most notable films of Scorsese's early period in Hollywood are *Taxi Driver* (1976) and *Raging Bull* (1980), both of which served as profile pieces that follow their protagonists (each played brilliantly by Robert De Niro) as they spiral down into an abyss of brutal and perverse self-destruction. De Niro began working with Scorsese on *Mean Streets*, and would star in a number of his most successful pictures, becoming a kind of filmic alter ego for the director. In *Taxi Driver*, Scorsese explored the role of an isolationist Vietnam veteran working in New York City, creating a dark and violent world of vigilantism based on the growing disdain for what the lead character, Travis Bickle, perceives as a morally reprehensible city-of-the-night.

After directing the post-World War II musical *New York, New York* (1977), Scorsese went on to direct two feature-length documentaries in 1978 (*American Boy: A Profile of Steven Prince* and *The Last Waltz*) before he made what many consider his best film, *Raging Bull*, an unsympathetic biopic about boxer Jake La Motta. The coarse black-and-white feature was nominated for a slew of Oscars, including those for Best Picture, which went to Robert Redford's *Ordinary People*; Best Director, an award that would



Film director Martin Scorsese gestures during a news conference in Rome to promote his movie *New York, New York*, on October 14, 1977. (AP/Wide World Photos)

elude Scorsese until 2006 when he made *The Departed*; and Best Actor, which went to De Niro for his disturbingly powerful portrayal of La Motta.

After completing the dark comedy *The King of Comedy* (1982), which again took place in New York City with the now customary Robert De Niro in the lead role, Scorsese made the little-known piece *After Hours* (1985) and another interesting but limited character study, *The Color of Money* (1986). Star Paul Newman won his only Best Actor award for his portrayal of the older incarnation of “Fast Eddie” Felson, a role he had made famous in Robert Rossen’s dazzling 1961 film *The Hustler*.

By the late 1980s, Scorsese had earned a reputation for gratuitous violence and language, but his most controversial picture was yet to come. *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988) was an adaptation of the widely banned book of the same name by Nikos Kazantzakis. Departing from the Biblical portrayal of the life of Jesus Christ, the story suggests that the Messiah gave into the temptation of being married to and having children with Mary Magdalene. Despite its unfavorable reception by many religious groups, the film earned Scorsese his second Best Director Academy Award nomination.

After directing a short piece in *New York Stories* (1989) and a short documentary on Giorgio Armani called *Made in Milan* (1990), Scorsese returned to his natural élan with *Goodfellas* (1990). Based on the nonfiction book *Wiseguy*, by Nicholas Pileggi, this candid, innovative, and more Coppolaesque exploration of the mob is among Scorsese’s most critically acclaimed films.

During the 1990s, Scorsese showed how diverse his examinations of culture and history could be when he made the noir thriller *Cape Fear* (1991) and the nineteenth-century period piece *The Age of Innocence* (1993). In 1995, he directed the companion piece to *Goodfellas*, an adaptation of another nonfiction Nicholas Pileggi book by the same name, *Casino*. While some portions of both films are fictionalized, Scorsese mixes enough actual events into these pictures to expose the wide-ranging presence of underworld crime organizations in America. Toward the end of the 1990s, Scorsese directed two spiritual exploration pieces, *Kundun* (1997) and *Bringing Out the Dead* (1999). The first was a biopic of the Dalai Lama, chronicling his childhood, spiritual journey, and exile to India in 1959. *Bringing Out the Dead* was a more personal story about a paramedic in Manhattan who must deal with visions of those who have died under his care.

Although a number of Scorsese’s early films are based on true stories, his twenty-first-century offerings stand out as touchstones of his work as an historian. In *Gangs of New York* (2002), which starred Leonardo DiCaprio, who seems to have replaced the aging De Niro as Scorsese’s alter ego, he meticulously recreated the Five Points area of 1860s New York City and the gang culture and anti-immigrant sensibilities that existed there. He then directed two documentary histories: an episode for the PBS series *The Blues* (2003) and *Lady by the Sea: The Statue of Liberty* (2004). His next picture, a biopic about Howard Hughes called *The Aviator* (2004), with DiCaprio in the lead role, offered audiences a provocative portrait of the iconic figure’s entrepreneurial endeavors, film career, and debilitating personal struggles. Scorsese followed *The Aviator* with another biographical documentary, *No Direction Home*, which explores the life of Bob Dylan and is, perhaps, the most revealing work about the notoriously circumspect performer.

Scorsese's most recent feature film, *The Departed* (2006), was a remake of the Hong Kong crime thriller *Mou gaan dou* (2002). Set in Boston and featuring an A-list ensemble cast, including DiCaprio, *The Departed* not only won the Oscar for Best Picture, but finally garnered him the long elusive Best Director Academy Award. Since *The Departed*, Scorsese has made the spoof short *The Key to Reserva* (2007), in which he is supposed to be directing a lost Alfred Hitchcock film. His last picture to be released was the documentary *Shine a Light* (2008), which chronicled the career of the Rolling Stones and featured concert footage from the band's 2006 tour.

During his long cinematic career, Scorsese has never been afraid to take chances with his films. Although his work has been of uneven quality, his successes have defined him as one of America's most important directors.

Selected Filmography

Shutter Island (2010); *The Departed* (2006); *The Aviator* (2004); *Gangs of New York* (2002); *Bringing Out the Dead* (1999); *Kundun* (1997); *Casino* (1995); *The Age of Innocence* (1993); *Cape Fear* (1991); *Goodfellas* (1990); *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988); *The Color of Money* (1986); *After Hours* (1984); *The King of Comedy* (1982); *Raging Bull* (1980); *The Last Waltz* (1978); *New York, New York* (1977); *Taxi Driver* (1976); *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* (1974); *Mean Streets* (1973); *Boxcar Bertha* (1972); *Who's That Knocking at My Door?* (1967)

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—Adam Dean

SCOTT, RIDLEY. Ridley Scott, born on November 30, 1937, has been one of the most successful directors of large-scale films, combining aesthetics with the needs of the marketplace. Although he has made horror, crime, political, war, and romantic films, he is best known for his science fiction films *Alien* and *Blade Runner*, and epics such as *Gladiator* (2000). Most of Scott's films, which feature distinctive cinematography and production design, find his protagonists coping with unusual, often violent circumstances.

Scott studied graphic design, advertising, and filmmaking at London's Royal College of Art. While there he made a short film, *Boy and a Bicycle* (1965), starring his father and younger brother, future director Tony Scott. After studying design with a New York advertising agency, Scott returned to London as a set designer for the BBC. He also directed a handful of television episodes for programs such as *Z Cars*. Beginning in 1968, Scott made hundreds of television commercials, eventually forming Ridley Scott

Associates, which made thousands more. Scott's commercials have a recognizable style, especially in regard to his use of atmospheric lighting. He continued making commercials after becoming a film director; perhaps the most famous of these is one he made for Apple computers inspired by George Orwell's *1984*.

Scott's successful advertising work led to his film career, beginning with *The Duellists* (1977). Based on a Joseph Conrad short story, the costume drama depicts a series of duels between two military officers (Keith Carradine and Harvey Keitel). Named the best first feature at the Cannes Film Festival, *The Duellists* is notable for its beautiful cinematography—Frank Tidy shot the film—recalling landscapes in French paintings produced during the Napoleonic era.

Scott moved quickly from this relatively modest beginning to making two of his most popular and critically acclaimed films. *Alien* (1979) follows the crew of the commercial spaceship *Nostromo*, named after the Joseph Conrad title, which lands on a distant planet where the crew members discover the hive of a strange creature. Seemingly safely back aboard the ship, their calm is shockingly interrupted when a small, angry creature erupts from the stomach of one of the crewmen (John Hurt). Soon, a large, even angrier monster is stalking the crew throughout the labyrinthine ship. *Alien*, which won an Academy Award for its groundbreaking special effects, became a franchise, with the subsequent entries helmed by other directors. It also introduced Ripley—and Sigourney Weaver—as one of the strongest and most admired female characters in film history.

Blade Runner (1982), adapted from the Philip K. Dick novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, blends the conventions of science fiction and film noir. Set in a futuristic Los Angeles, *Blade Runner* focuses on the efforts of Rick Deckard (Harrison Ford) to track down four fugitive replicants—(very) humanlike robots—led by the violent Roy Batty (Rutger Hauer). Production design is often the central element of Scott's films, and *Blade Runner* is no exception. Designer Lawrence G. Paull created a dark, dank, bleak cityscape, both in homage to the film's noir antecedents and also to underscore the extreme dangers faced by Deckard. This Los Angeles—so full of decay one can almost smell the rot wafting off the screen—plays on viewers' fears of an unknown future and the possibility that technology may backfire.

Scott's directorial career has been uneven, and his films immediately after *Blade Runner* were less than successful. *Legend* (1985), a medieval sword-and-sorcery adventure starring Tom Cruise, was a major box-office disappointment. Although lovely to look at, its story, featuring a princess, elves, and unicorns, is spare and unoriginal. Similarly, although *Someone to Watch over Me* (1987), which focuses on a love triangle among a New York policeman (Tom Berenger), his working-class wife (Lorraine Bracco), and a sophisticated heiress (Mimi Rogers), looks splendid, it did not achieve the emotional impact Scott sought to impart. He followed the film with an even darker cop tale, *Black Rain* (1989), which starred Michael Douglas as a New York police detective pursuing a yakuza boss (Yusaku Matsuda) in Japan. Although Scott seemed sincere in his attempts to explore cultural differences, some found *Black Rain* jingoistic—perhaps because it too often slipped into being little more than a slick thriller whose characters are merely caricatures.

With the critical and commercial success of *Thelma and Louise* (1991), Scott finally proved he could make an effective contemporary drama. Friends Thelma (Geena

Davis) and Louise (Susan Sarandon) decide to take a break from the men (Chris McDonald and Michael Madsen) in their lives by going on the road in the American Southwest. After Louise kills a would-be rapist, the two, soon joined by a young criminal (Brad Pitt), are on the run from the law. With an Academy Award-winning screenplay by Callie Khouri, *Thelma and Louise* broke new ground as an entertaining, violent female buddy/road film. Because of his emphasis on visual style, Scott often does not get sufficient credit for his direction of actors, but in *Thelma and Louise* he was able to elicit excellent performances from Davis, Sarandon, Pitt, and, as a sympathetic cop, Harvey Keitel. The film's ending, with the women gleefully committing suicide, provoked the most controversy associated with any Scott film, especially among feminist film critics, who found the film's suggestion that the only way for women to overcome patriarchal oppression is either to act just like men or to kill themselves.

True to form, Scott followed the successful *Thelma and Louise* with a series of uninspired offerings. *1492: Conquest of Paradise* (1992), with Gérard Depardieu as Christopher Columbus, is considered by many to be Scott's weakest film. *White Squall* (1996), which follows a no-nonsense sea captain (Jeff Bridges) as he leads a group of prep school boys on a fateful schooner journey, was ignored by audiences. *G. I. Jane* (1997), in which a young woman (Demi Moore) becomes the first female participant in the Navy SEAL program, proved dull and heavy-handed in its attempt to ask serious questions about the issue of women in combat.

Once again, though, Scott rebounded from his slump with a big—his biggest—box-office success, *Gladiator*, which demonstrated that the talented director possessed a deft hand in shaping large-scale historical epics. Maximus (Russell Crowe) is a general in the Roman army and close advisor to Emperor Marcus Aurelius (Richard Harris). When the emperor dies and is replaced by his devious son, Commodus (Joaquin Phoenix), Maximus is sentenced to be executed; he escapes, is captured by slave traders, and becomes a gladiator. The film portrays its protagonist, Maximus, as a far more complex figure than have the vast majority of action spectacles, prompting comparisons between *Gladiator* and Stanley Kubrick's *Spartacus* (1960). Indeed, Maximus joins Ripley and Deckard—but probably not Thelma and Louise—in the growing line of Scott characters whose lives are disrupted by violent circumstances but who bear up and become stronger individuals for their trouble. A critical and box-office success, *Gladiator* earned \$187 million in American theaters and won five Academy Awards, including those for Best Picture and Best Actor.

Scott has made some odd choices during his long career, none more unusual than following the triumph of *Gladiator* with a sequel to an earlier Oscar-winning film made by another director. *Hannibal* (2001) continues the story of the relationship between serial killer Hannibal Lecter (Anthony Hopkins) and FBI agent Clarice Starling (Julianne Moore), first seen in Jonathan Demme's *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991), in which Jodie Foster played Starling. Lecter resurfaces after a decade in hiding to torment Starling, while one of his former victims (Gary Oldman) plots revenge. Despite lukewarm reviews, with most critics considering it inferior to its predecessor, *Hannibal* did surprisingly well at the box office.

Critics and audiences alike responded with enthusiasm to *Black Hawk Down* (2001), which was based on real-life events that occurred in 1993 when an elite team of American soldiers was dropped into Somalia with orders to kidnap two lieutenants of a vicious warlord, only to become engaged in a lengthy, and costly, battle. Perhaps Scott's grittiest film, *Black Hawk Down* successfully conveys the chaos of war; it also has the feel of the countless combat-crew-as-heroic-band-of-brothers-oriented WWII films that preceded it, even though it is obviously not set during that earlier conflict. *Matchstick Men* (2003) was Scott's first comedy and his smallest-scale film. Neurotic con man Roy (Nicolas Cage) is so overcome by panic attacks that he resists the pleas of his partner (Sam Rockwell) to pull off the "big job." Everything changes when Angela (Alison Lohman), the daughter Roy has never met, enters the picture. Regardless of their scale, the best of Scott's films are always character studies, and *Matchstick Men* works as a charming, offbeat look at three quite different, yet equally quirky characters.

Scott returned to epics with *Kingdom of Heaven* (2005). During the crusades of the twelfth century, a knight (Liam Neeson) informs a blacksmith (Orlando Bloom) that he is the young man's father and convinces him to accompany the knight's forces to Jerusalem. Reviewers compared *Kingdom of Heaven* unfavorably to *Gladiator*, and the audience response was tepid. The 145-minute theatrical version suffered from the inclusion of an overwhelming number of characters and situations that were not properly developed; a problem resolved, somewhat, in the 194-minute director's cut.

Scott reunited with Crowe for another modest film, the romantic comedy *A Good Year* (2006), in which a ruthless British financial trader (Crowe) inherits a Provençal vineyard from his uncle (Albert Finney) and discovers his humanity with the help of a local café owner (Marion Cotillard). This pleasant diversion was followed by Scott's most brutally violent film, *American Gangster* (2007), in which a Harlem drug lord (Denzel Washington) and an ambitious cop (Russell Crowe again) begin as adversaries only to discover that, ironically, they have much in common. In addition to offering two powerful performances, *American Gangster* recalled the murky morality tales that marked 1960s New York.

Arriving at a time when audiences were demonstrating a pronounced indifference to films related to the war in Iraq, *Body of Lies* (2008) was greeted with shrugs; it may, however, be Scott's most underrated film. *Body of Lies* is built around the contrast between CIA agent Roger Ferris (Leonardo DiCaprio) and his stateside boss Ed Hoffman (Russell Crowe again). While Ferris dodges bullets in the Middle East, paunchy Hoffman barks orders into his cell phone while watching his daughter play soccer and eating junk food. Such attention to detail and interest in character make *Body of Lies* much more than a thriller about terrorism. The subsequent Scott-Crowe collaboration, *Robin Hood* (2010), was a critical and commercial failure, dismissed, seemingly even before it was released, as a warmed-over reimagining of *Gladiator*.

In 1995, Scott and his brother formed Scott Free Productions, through which they have been able to produce not only their own films, but those of others, most notably Andrew Dominick's *The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford* (2007). The company has also involved itself in producing television series, the most recent, the popular Julianna Margulies vehicle, *The Good Wife*—another strong female

character, this one forced to negotiate the shoals of marital betrayal and the enormous pressures of high-priced criminal law. Scott became Sir Ridley in 2003 when he was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II for his contributions to the British film industry.

Consistently drawn to explorations of human ambiguity—strength expressed in the midst of horrible weakness—Scott has demonstrated that he is much more than just a Cecil B. DeMille-like showman interested only in ostentatious spectacle. Sometimes dismissed as a director more concerned with the look of his films than he is with their content, Scott has nonetheless added a great deal to the cinematic conversation.

See also: *Blade Runner*; *Gladiator*; *Science Fiction Film, The*; *Thelma and Louise*

Selected Filmography

Robin Hood (2010); *Body of Lies* (2008); *American Gangster* (2007); *A Good Year* (2006); *Kingdom of Heaven* (2005); *Matchstick Men* (2003); *Black Hawk Down* (2001); *Hannibal* (2001); *Gladiator* (2000); *G.I. Jane* (1997); *White Squall* (1996); *1492: Conquest of Paradise* (1992); *Thelma and Louise* (1991); *Black Rain* (1989/I); *Someone to Watch Over Me* (1987); *Legend* (1985); *Blade Runner* (1982); *Alien* (1979); *The Duellists* (1977)

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—Michael Adams

SINATRA, FRANK. One of the icons of twentieth-century American pop culture, Francis Albert Sinatra was born on December 12, 1915, in Hoboken, New Jersey. Of Italian American descent, he was both a gifted singer and a talented actor who attracted legions of fans and received critical acclaim during a career that remained vital from the 1940s until his death in 1998.

Sinatra's earliest film roles were largely cameos or thinly disguised versions of himself, and were little more than attempts to cash in on his notoriety as a singer and teen idol. This began to change with his role as Clarence Doolittle in the 1945 film *Anchors Aweigh*. Sinatra plays a naive and virginal sailor who, along with the self-professed "wolf" Joseph Brady (Gene Kelly), is granted a five-day leave—in Hollywood of all places. The role, like many of this early period in his career, found Sinatra playing the wide-eyed, rail-thin kid learning to find love, expressing a sense of longing and wistfulness through song, and sometimes dance. In *On the Town*—which again starred Kelly, who also co-directed—Sinatra plays Chip, a rube from Peoria who is awestruck by the sights and sounds of New York City. Hints of the dramatic, and often socially conscious roles that were to come, can be seen in *The House I Live In*, a 10-minute



Frank Sinatra as Pfc. Angelo Maggio in a scene from the 1953 film *From Here to Eternity*. Sinatra received an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor in the film. (AP/Wide World Photos)

short in which Sinatra, playing himself, teaches a group of ruffians a lesson about religious tolerance and the significance of the defeat of the Nazis in World War II; Sinatra won an Honorary Academy Award for his performance.

The arrival of the 1950s saw near-ruin for Sinatra in both his singing and acting careers. While a throat ailment put his singing career in jeopardy—and ended his contract with Columbia records—Sinatra's own actions almost derailed his acting career. Bad publicity from an extramarital affair with Ava Gardner and declarations of his disdain for acting, as well as an off-color joke he made about a horse-riding accident involving studio head Louis B. Mayer, resulted in the termination of Sinatra's contract with MGM. Following a period in which he would dabble in radio and television, Sinatra's acting career was reborn in 1953 when he accepted the role—after being

required to audition—of Pvt. Angelo Maggio in *From Here to Eternity*. The film starred Burt Lancaster, Deborah Kerr, and Montgomery Clift, who took Sinatra under his wing, becoming his de facto acting coach. Sinatra earned an Oscar for his supporting performance as a world-weary soldier who understands the importance of loyalty to his friends and family. During the next 15 years, Sinatra would accept a number of roles in what turned out to be extremely popular and critically significant films. Perhaps the most important of these came in 1962, when Sinatra played Major Ben Marco in *The Manchurian Candidate*, a Cold War political thriller that critic Greil Marcus has called a quintessential American film that ranks alongside *Citizen Kane* and *The Godfather* (Marcus, 1989).

As Sinatra's popularity as a singer grew to unprecedented heights, he emerged as the "Chairman of the Board" of the so-called "Rat Pack," a group of performers including Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr., Peter Lawford, and Joey Bishop who became as well known for their onstage antics as they were for their connections to famous politicians—including the Kennedys—and Mafia bosses. Sinatra would ultimately

transpose his musical stage role as Chairman of the Board onto the big screen, leading his crew in lighthearted romps such as *Ocean's Eleven* (1960) and *Robin and the Seven Hoods* (1965).

Significantly, although Sinatra played a wide range of parts during his acting career, his place in American cinema was particularly important because of the Italian American characters he played. Although in some instances Sinatra did play characters on the wrong side of the law, most of his performances were far removed from the stereotypical mafioso or mustached paisan restaurateur. Indeed, instead of reinforcing the disturbing stereotypes of Italian Americans as criminal or cartoonish figures, Sinatra used his popularity and influence as a musical and screen performer to enhance the status of thousands of Americans who shared his ethnic heritage.

Frank Sinatra died on May 14, 1998, in Los Angeles.

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—Kenneth Shonk

SINGLETON, JOHN. John Singleton is an African American director, writer, and producer living in Los Angeles. With his acclaimed debut film *Boyz N' the Hood* (1991), which he both wrote and directed, as well as subsequent films such as *Poetic Justice* (1993) and *Higher Learning* (1995), Singleton soon reached a position as one of the most prominent and respected black filmmakers of the 1990s.

The socially conscious, semiautobiographical *Boyz N' the Hood* won many fans and received a great deal of critical praise for its unflinching depiction of black youths struggling in the ghettos of south central Los Angeles. The film's significance was recognized with a 1991 New York Film Critics Circle award for Best New Director and two Oscar nominations in 1992. It also helped initiate the sub-genre of "hood films." Even into the present day, Singleton continues his involvement with films that focus on contentious aspects of the black experience in America, including the historical drama *Rosewood* (1997) and the remake of the blaxploitation classic *Shaft* (2000). Over the years, Singleton has occasionally departed from making social problem or message films, including the Michael Jackson music video *Remember the Time* (1995) and the action film *2 Fast 2 Furious* (2003).

John Singleton was born on January 6, 1968, in Los Angeles. He grew up in predominantly black south central Los Angeles, a place of seemingly endless dramatic potential that would inform each of his future works. Singleton wished to be a filmmaker from his childhood and thus steeped himself in the films and television shows of the 1970s. His plans for involvement in the film industry, though, began to



Director John Singleton poses for a portrait at the Television Guide Channel Studios on August 24, 2007 in Hollywood. (Getty Images)

materialize in his early twenties. It is during this time that he met his inspiration Spike Lee; attended the University of Southern California Filmic Writing Program, where he won two Jack Nicholson writing awards; and served an internship at Columbia Pictures, which provided him the exposure necessary to secure a film deal for *Boyz N' the Hood* while still a student at USC (Barboza, 2009).

From his start as a filmmaker, Singleton has consciously striven to bring a black cultural presence to the film industry. One way he has achieved this end is by employing ensemble casts primarily comprised of black actors. As part of this approach, he has cast rappers and R&B singers in a number of his films. Ice Cube (*Boyz N' the Hood*), Tupac Shakur (*Poetic Justice*), Janet Jackson (*Poetic Justice*), and Tyrese Gibson (*Baby Boy*, *2 Fast 2 Furious*, and *Four Brothers*) have all figured prominently in his works. He also infuses his soundtracks with rap and R&B music, further reinforcing his ties to the black artistic community and providing his films with a contemporary urban feel that is entirely in keeping with his settings.

Singleton's works are populated with archetypes drawn from the black community who represent different aspects of black thought and culture. These archetypes range from characters espousing Black Nationalist views to unwitting Uncle Toms, adding great tension to his films. Oftentimes, in fact, such tensions spring as much from competing perspectives in the black community, including those defined by class and gender, as they do from the problems still haunting black/white relations in America. In this way, Singleton repeatedly examines issues involving race, including the nature of black on black violence and separatism in films such as *Boyz N' the Hood* and *Rosewood*.

Notions of duty and violence go hand-in-hand in many of Singleton's films. In his later films, such as *Shaft*, *Baby Boy* (2001), and *Four Brothers* (2005), Singleton focuses on violence as a masculine, retributive force, featuring protagonists who are fueled by righteous anger and a will to see justice meted out by any means necessary, including murder. In fact, as one scholar contends, Singleton's suggestion that murder may be a credible way to fight injustice underscores a distrust of official forms of redress that exists among some members of the black community (Massood, 2004). Given this persistent thematic focus, then, several of Singleton's films clearly advocate self-sufficiency and militancy rather than legal mediation and nonviolence.

Currently, Singleton is taking part in the documentary *Lost Forever* and directing a feature film, *Luke Cage*. *Luke Cage* focuses on a street smart, black superhero that suffers an injustice at the hands of the police, acquires super powers, and becomes a hero for hire, a story undoubtedly ripe for Singleton's vision. Since 2005, the film has had several tentative release dates, but it has yet to reach theaters.

Selected Filmography

Four Brothers (2005); *2 Fast 2 Furious* (2003); *Baby Boy* (2001); *Shaft* (2000); *Rosewood* (1997); *Higher Learning* (1995); *Poetic Justice* (1993); *Boyz N' the Hood* (1991)

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—Caleb Puckett

SPIELBERG, STEVEN. By the age of 35, Steven Spielberg, a self-proclaimed "moviemaker," became one of the best-known and wealthiest figures in the film industry after producing 4 of the 10 most lucrative pictures ever made. He has consistently created thoughtful, imaginative, and sometimes disturbing films since he started his career in the 1950s.

Steven Allan Spielberg was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, on December 18, 1947, but was largely raised in Haddonfield, New Jersey, Scottsdale, Arizona, and various locations in California. His father, Arnold, was a computer engineer and his mother, Leah Adler (née Posner), a restaurateur and a concert pianist. While Spielberg was spending the late 1950s and early 1960s in Scottsdale schools, his father allowed him to start making home movies to help boost his confidence. After graduating from Arcadia High School, Spielberg applied to some of the top film programs in the country, but was rejected by all of them. He eventually enrolled at California State University, Long



Steven Spielberg, perhaps the most financially successful filmmaker of all time. Spielberg has received international acclaim and has had an incalculable effect on American popular culture. (AFP/Getty Images)

Beach, near Los Angeles, as an English major. As an ambitious undergraduate, Spielberg took a tour of Universal Studios, where his dreams of becoming a filmmaker would soon be realized when he signed a seven-year contract with Universal in 1969.

Excited by both television and movies from an early age, Spielberg was particularly influenced by Disney films. Frightened but innocently moved by the “Night on Bald Mountain” scene in *Fantasia*, he realized that he wanted to become a moviemaker. Years later, he would use his childhood fears as foundational elements in many of his films. By the time he was 12 years old, Spielberg had become an expert at making home movies and began to expand his imaginative vision.

Starting his filmmaking career in television, Spielberg began to gain notoriety as an uncredited assistant editor on the popular western *Wagon Train* (1957). He went on to direct short films and television shows such as *The Last Gun* (1959), *Escape to Nowhere* (1961), and *Amblin’* (1968), the

latter title subsequently becoming the name of his first production company. Other television spots included *Marcus Welby, M.D.* (1969), *Rod Serling’s “Night Gallery”* (1970), and *Columbo: Murder by the Book* (1971).

Spielberg made his directorial debut in feature films with *The Sugarland Express* (1974), marking him as a rising star in the industry. It was his next directorial effort, however, the iconic *Jaws* (1975), that brought him worldwide attention. Adapted from Peter Benchley’s novel of the same title, the now-classic, *Moby Dick*-like tale of a massive, Great White shark that preys on innocent human victims not only grossed over \$100 million and initiated the tradition of the summer blockbuster, it kept thousands of beachgoers out of the water during the summer of 1975. Spielberg continued to showcase his talent with a story of alien invasion in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977), which brought him his first Best Director Oscar nomination. Enjoying the

process of producing science fiction films, he went on to make *Poltergeist* (1982) and *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial* (1982), the latter picture garnering him a second Academy Award nomination for Best Direction. He spent the remainder of the 1980s working on what would become cinematic classics: the *Indiana Jones* series (*Raiders of the Lost Ark* [1981]; *Temple of Doom* [1981]; and *The Last Crusade* [1989]); *Gremlins* (1984); *The Goonies* (1985); *An American Tail* (1986); the *Back to the Future* trilogy; and the literary adaptation *The Color Purple* (1985).

Spielberg spun off in a new direction in the late 1980s and early 1990s when he tried his hand at producing animated films. In 1988, he made *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*. He went on to work with Warner Bros., producing animated series such as *Tiny Toon Adventures* (1990), *Animaniacs* (1993), and *Pinky and the Brain* (1995), as well as the feature film *The Land before Time* (1988). Animation ultimately led to animatronics in the summer movie blockbuster *Jurassic Park* (1993), a cautionary tale about the dangers of human attempts to control nature.

The 1990s would also mark the point at which Spielberg, along with colleagues Jeffrey Katzenberg and David Geffen, created the enormously successful film studio DreamWorks SKG. In 2004, Spielberg and company would create DreamWorks Animation SKG in order to create, produce, and distribute animated features. DreamWorks was sold in 2005 to Paramount Pictures for \$1.6 billion, but Spielberg remained connected to the studio. After entering into and then breaking off negotiations with Universal Studios, DreamWorks agreed to a six-year, 30-picture deal with the Walt Disney Company in early 2009.

Harkening back to the dramatic material he explored when he adapted *The Color Purple* for the screen, Spielberg turned his attention to the subject of the Holocaust in 1993 when he decided to make *Schindler's List*. Embraced by critics and viewers alike, this poignant, disturbing film won the Academy Award for Best Picture and garnered Spielberg his first Academy Award as Best Director. (Two years later, in 1995, he was honored by the American Film Institute with the Life Achievement Award for his contribution to the motion picture industry.)

Spielberg's war-related productions—such as *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), the mini-series *Band of Brothers* (2001), *Flags of Our Fathers* (2006) and *Letters from Iwo Jima* (2006) (the latter two directed by Clint Eastwood)—have also had a major impact on American audiences. In addition to these films, he has attracted a new audience of younger, adventure-seeking viewers by producing and distributing films such as *Transformers* (2007) and *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen* (2009).

Although Spielberg has been accused, rightly, of being unable to resist a turn toward what may be described as redemptive sentimentality in even his most serious films—*Schindler's List*, *Artificial Intelligence: AI*, *Minority Report*, *Saving Private Ryan*—few deny that he is an extraordinary and immensely popular filmmaker who continues to inspire audiences with his unique brand of cinematic genius.

Selected Filmography

Indiana Jones and the Temple of the Crystal Skull (2008); *War of the Worlds* (2005); *Catch Me If You Can* (2002); *Minority Report* (2002); *Artificial Intelligence: AI* (2001); *Saving Private Ryan*

(1998); *Amistad* (1997); *Schindler's List* (1993); *Jurassic Park* (1993); *Hook* (1991); *Always* (1989); *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989); *Empire of the Sun* (1987); *The Color Purple* (1985); *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984); *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial* (1982); *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981); *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977); *Jaws* (1975); *Sugarland Express* (1974)

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—Katherine Ann Fridirici

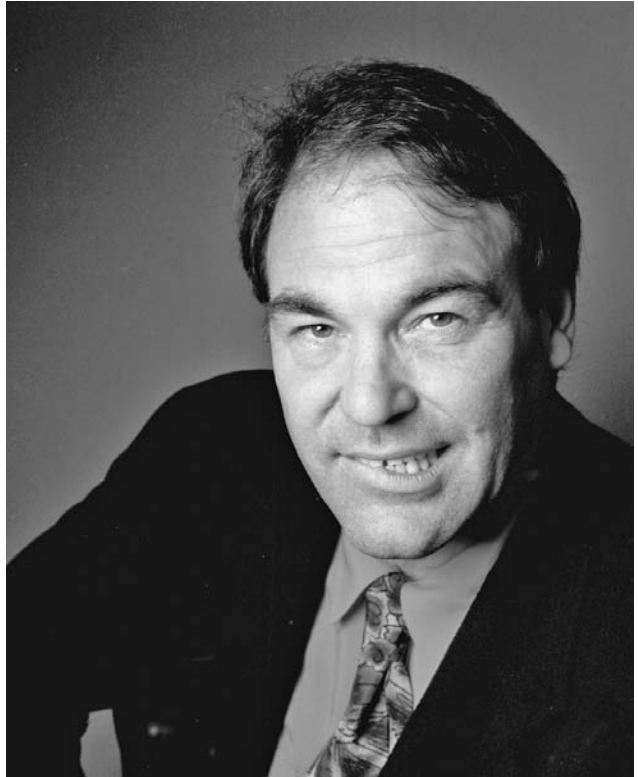
STONE, OLIVER. Oliver Stone is an American screenwriter and director best known for his controversial historical dramas. His most critically acclaimed films are those included in his "Vietnam Trilogy": *Platoon* (1986), *Born on the Fourth of July* (1989), and *Heaven and Earth* (1993). He is the winner of three Academy Awards, two for Best Director and one for his screenplay for *Midnight Express* (1978).

Stone was born in New York City, September 15, 1946. In 1967, he enlisted in the U.S. Army, requesting combat duty. After serving one tour in Vietnam, he returned to New York and enrolled at New York University, ultimately earning a bachelor's degree in film in 1971.

During his early career, he was primarily a writer, contributing film critiques to publications such as the *Village Voice*. Although he directed some "B" horror films, his breakthrough moment came when he wrote the screenplay for *Midnight Express*. He went on to write screenplays for *Conan the Barbarian* (1982), *Scarface* (1983), and *Year of the Dragon* (1985). These latter three scripts earned him a reputation among some critics as a shallow-minded and exploitative writer. This changed, however, when he co-wrote (with Rick Boyle) and directed *Salvador*, a movie sympathetic to the left-leaning revolutionaries of the Salvadoran Civil War. Although it was not a box-office success, it did help define Stone as a more serious filmmaker.

In 1986, he directed *Platoon*, based on his experiences in Vietnam. A financial and critical success, it won four Oscars, including those for Best Picture and Best Director. Considered a serious antiwar film, *Platoon* was heralded for its realistic portrayal of Vietnam. The second of Stone's Vietnam films, *Born on the Fourth of July*, was a biographical treatment of the postwar experiences of Ron Kovic, a combatant who was severely wounded in battle and left paralyzed. In *Heaven and Earth*, the last picture in his trilogy, Stone explored the true story of a Vietnamese girl who marries an American soldier and is brought by him to the United States.

With the release of *Wall Street* in 1987, a picture in which he excoriated the greed and excesses of the Reagan era, Stone began to be seen as one of America's most popular filmmakers; soon after, however, he also was viewed as one of the nation's most controversial "issue" filmmakers. While *Wall Street* was well received, Stone's 1991 picture *JFK*, although a box-office success, was derided by critics and most historians as a paranoid, conspiratorial assessment of the Kennedy assassination. *Natural Born Killers* (1994), his attempt to satirize the media's exploitation of violence, was criticized for being excessively brutal and, ironically, for glorifying violence instead of condemning it. And his attempt to portray the disgraced Richard Nixon as a complex, tragic figure in *Nixon* (1995), was ridiculed by critics and largely ignored by audiences.



Director Oliver Stone poses following an interview in New York in 1991. (AP/Wide World Photos)

For almost a decade, Stone turned away from making overtly political pictures, producing a series of provocative films that did little to lift him back to cinematic prominence. In 1997, for instance, he offered audiences a noir thriller, *U Turn*, an intriguing film with a wonderful ensemble cast that was roundly rejected by both audiences and critics. In 1999 he released *On Any Given Sunday*, a sports film that sought to expose the darker side of American masculinity, but was hampered by a woefully miscast Al Pacino as a professional football coach. And in 2004, stretching himself to his directorial breaking point, he released his overlong historical epic *Alexander* (2004), which was ridiculed for its homoeroticism even as Stone insisted that his portrayal was historically accurate.

W (2008) marked the return of Stone the political filmmaker. Released only weeks before the end of George W. Bush's presidency, the film attempted, as *Nixon* had, to disclose the psychological complexity of a failed political figure. The film garnered substantial press coverage, sparked widespread dialogue, and received a good number of very positive reviews.

Interestingly, while most critics agree that Stone is a talented filmmaker, many of them accuse him of using his movies to rewrite history in order to express his own

distorted ideological vision. In response, Stone has either denied the charge—claiming, for instance, that a film such as *JFK* represented solid historical research and forced a government reexamination of the Warren Commission Report—or he has insisted, rather incongruously, that he is merely a dramatist and thus his political “histories” should not be subject to the same sort of vetting brought to bear on the work of academic scholars.

Selected Filmography

Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps (2010); *W* (2008); *Alexander* (2004); *Any Given Sunday* (1999); *U Turn* (1997); *Nixon* (1995); *Natural Born Killers* (1994); *Heaven and Earth* (1993); *JFK* (1991); *The Doors* (1991); *Born on the Fourth of July* (1989); *Talk Radio* (1988); *Wall Street* (1987); *Platoon* (1986); *Salvador* (1986); *The Hand* (1981)

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—Alan C. Abbott

STREISAND, BARBRA. Barbra Streisand is an American actor, director, singer, composer, and political activist. Besides being one of Hollywood’s most successful performers, she has earned the reputation for being among its most talented. Streisand is also known for breaking down barriers for women in the cinematic and recording industries, from changing traditional standards of beauty to becoming the first female film director to receive the Kennedy Center Honors.

Barbara Joan Streisand was born on April 24, 1942, in Brooklyn, New York (she dropped the “a” from her first name early in her career). After being turned down by every major record label for being “too Jewish”—for having a nose that was too prominent—Streisand started singing in a New York gay bar, the Lion Club, before moving to venues such as Bon Soir. She eventually earned a reputation that landed her guest spots on the nation’s biggest television shows, such as *The Jack Paar Show* in 1961. In 1962, she made her Broadway debut in a supporting role as a homely secretary in *I Can Get It for You Wholesale*. Streisand was singled out for her performance, earning various awards and enough praise to convince Columbia Records to give her a contract in 1962—as well as unprecedented creative control for a female recording artist. Her self-titled first album appeared in 1964, earning Streisand two Grammy awards (one for Album of the Year). She is currently the top-selling female recording artist of all time (and second only to Elvis Presley for overall album sales). In the 1960s, she also created a series of critically acclaimed television specials.

Always intent on becoming an actor, in 1964 Streisand accepted the role of legendary Jewish comic Fanny Brice in the Broadway musical *Funny Girl*. The film adaptation allowed Streisand to make her cinematic debut in 1968—one of the most auspicious in Hollywood’s history. Her character’s first lines addressed the fact that she did not look like Hollywood’s typical leading lady: “Hello, Gorgeous.” Gorgeous or not, the film made her a bona fide star. She followed with two more musicals: *Hello Dolly!* (1969) and Vincente Minnelli’s *On a Clear Day You Can See Forever* (1970).

Streisand’s first nonmusical vehicle, *The Owl and the Pussycat* (1970), altered her burgeoning persona (as a wholesome musical star) by casting her as a foul-mouthed call girl. Peter Bogdanovich then provided Streisand with another nonsinging role in his homage to Howard Hawks’s

Bringing Up Baby (1938), *What’s Up, Doc?* (1972). The farce was a blockbuster success and cemented Streisand’s status as a box-office titan. She went on to star as the bookish and outspoken Katie Morosky opposite Robert Redford’s big-man-on-campus Hubbell Gardner in the romantic classic *The Way We Were* (1973). After a couple of forgettable, though profitable, films (*For Pete’s Sake* [1974] and *Funny Lady* [1975]), Streisand decided to put her own spin on a Hollywood classic with her rendition of *A Star Is Born* (1976). In the film, Streisand plays Esther Hoffman, an up-and-coming singer who meets, and falls in love with, an established rocker (Kris Kristofferson) whose career is on the decline. The film was a box-office smash, as was its soundtrack. Streisand composed the music for the film’s love theme, “Evergreen.”

In 1983, Streisand became the first woman in Hollywood to direct, star in, write, and produce a film when she released *Yentl*, a project she had worked on for 15 years. She adapted the narrative about an orphaned Jewish girl who poses as a man in order to study Torah (rather than simply marry) from a short story by Isaac Bashevis Singer. Although the film is technically a musical, the songs are reflections of Yentl’s inner thoughts, and thus are all sung by Streisand.



Barbra Streisand poses after being crowned Miss Ziegfeld of 1965 at the Ziegfeld Club Ball at New York’s Waldorf Astoria Hotel in 1964. (AP/Wide World Photos)

After her dramatic turn as the high-class prostitute verging on madness in *Nuts* (1987), Streisand returned to directing with *The Prince of Tides* (1991), the story of a troubled Southern family that unfolds as Tom (Nick Nolte) falls in love with his suicidal sister's therapist (Streisand). Adapted from Pat Conroy's novel of the same name, the film was a critical and commercial success, garnering multiple nominations and awards, including an Academy Award nomination for Best Picture—though Streisand herself was snubbed. Several critics called Streisand narcissistic for performing in her own films—even though male stars such as Kevin Costner and Clint Eastwood would do the same—and implied that she was miscast as an attractive therapist.

Nevertheless, Streisand cast herself in her third directorial feature, *The Mirror Has Two Faces* (1996), though here she plays a frumpy, unattractive Columbia professor, Rose, who meets an attractive man (Jeff Bridges), who has sworn off beautiful women and is looking for a companion. The film is notable for reinvigorating the career of Lauren Bacall (who played Rose's mother). After almost a decade away from the big screen, Streisand returned as Rozalin Focker, a sex therapist and mother in *Meet the Fockers* (2004).

Streisand has won two Academy Awards; the first in 1968 for Best Actress in *Funny Girl* (which she shared with Katharine Hepburn) and the second as the composer of "Evergreen" in 1976. She was nominated for her performance in *The Way We Were* and for the music of *The Mirror Has Two Faces*. She has earned 3 Emmy Awards, 10 Grammys, and 10 Golden Globes (more than any other artist). Streisand has also been presented France's Legion of Honour and been named a Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters by that nation. Through her Barwood production company, Streisand oversees film and television productions that foster awareness of social issues; and her Streisand Foundation is an active force for human and civil rights, environmental protection, AIDS research, and issues of women's health.

Selected Filmography

Little Fockers (2010); *Meet the Fockers* (2004); *The Mirror Has Two Faces* (1996); *The Prince of Tides* (1991); *Nuts* (1987); *Yentl* (1983); *All Night Long* (1981); *The Main Event* (1979); *A Star Is Born* (1976); *Funny Lady* (1975); *For Pete's Sake* (1974); *The Way We Were* (1973); *Up the Sandbox* (1972); *What's Up, Doc?* (1972); *The Owl and the Pussycat* (1970); *On a Clear Day You Can See Forever* (1970); *Hello, Dolly!* (1969); *Funny Girl* (1968)

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—Kyle Stevens

STURGES, JOHN. In a certain sense, the legendary films that John Eliot Sturges (born January 3, 1911) directed—including *Bad Day at Black Rock* (1955), *Gunfight at the O.K. Corral* (1957), *The Magnificent Seven* (1960), and *The Great Escape*

(1963)—eclipsed his career. Indeed, sifting the scholarly literature about Hollywood's "forgotten" maestro of big action movies yields barely more than a modicum of information. Although many books about John Ford, Howard Hawks, Alfred Hitchcock, Sam Peckinpah, and Stanley Kubrick have appeared, only one has been written about Sturges. Sturges's biggest collaborators, producer Walter Mirisch and assistant producer Robert Relyea, have contributed their memories of him, but these qualify more as peripheral than definitive information. Nevertheless, Sturges left behind a body of films that commands respect and critical recognition. Acknowledged as a specialist in big event movies about men in life-and-death predicaments, Sturges and his work lie concealed like a treasure beneath the shifting sands of film scholarship. He wrote no autobiography, and he did not conclude his life on the lecture circuit discussing his films. Figuratively, he vanished at sea doing what he enjoyed most, fishing. Shortly after finishing his last film, *The Eagle Has Landed*, in 1977, he turned into the "old man and the sea," effectively living the life of a recluse.

Sturges's career unfolded in three phases. First, he worked as a contract director at Columbia and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Second, he became an independent, producing and directing films that the Mirisch brothers (Walter, Marvin, and Harold) released through United Artists. Third, after the expensive failure of *The Hallelujah Trail* (1965), he worked as a freelancer for major producers. Sturges learned his craft at Columbia and honed it at MGM. Before he began directing movies at Columbia, he served as an editor at RKO under George Stevens, John Ford, and Garson Kanin. World War II erupted and Sturges entered the U.S. Army Air Corps. He produced training films, and eventually co-directed the documentary *Thunderbolt* (1947), with William Wyler, about the 1944 Italian campaign. During the war, Sturges rose to the rank of captain.

The first movie Sturges directed at Columbia, *The Man Who Dared* (1946), a remake of the 1935 mystery-thriller *Circumstantial Evidence* (1935), concerned a crusading journalist investigating murder convictions based on flawed circumstantial evidence. He made two more movies in 1946, *Shadowed* and *Mr. Twilight*. He wrote off his Columbia pictures as "twelve day movies . . . about old ladies and dogs." In 1949, he made his first western, *The Walking Hills*. This modern-day Randolph Scott oater focused on a group of greedy treasure seekers searching the desert for a lost wagon train that had vanished with a fortune in gold. *The Walking Hills* ranked as Columbia's biggest moneymaker of 1949. After making another contemporary western, *The Capture*, for RKO, Sturges joined MGM, where he remained until 1960, helming a variety of films with bigger budgets. He made biographies, such as *The Magnificent Yankee* (1950), an adaptation of the Broadway play about the famous jurist Oliver Wendell Holmes. He made *Mystery Street*, a police procedural with evocative film noir lighting that foreshadowed the CBS-TV crime show *CSI* in its elaborate reconstruction of the murder of a B-girl. Significantly, Sturges displayed his enlightened attitude toward minorities when he cast Ricardo Montalban as *Mystery Street's* Portuguese American police lieutenant who headed up the investigation. He made his first and only musical, *Fast Company*, in 1953, and demonstrated his knack with suspense thrillers in the Barbara Stanwyck film *Jeopardy* (1953). He also demonstrated his logistical flair for

staging big action scenes in the Civil War cavalry western *Escape from Fort Bravo* (1953). Sturges's first major movie, *Bad Day at Black Rock* (1955), a searing social-consciousness indictment of racism in postwar America, garnered him an Oscar nomination, his one and only, as Best Director.

Sturges found his niche in westerns. He made *Backlash* with Richard Widmark in 1956. MGM loaned him to Hal Wallis at Paramount, where he directed the box-office blockbuster *Gunfight at the O.K. Corral* with Burt Lancaster and Kirk Douglas as Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday. Critics praised Sturges for his choreography of the title showdown. He then reunited with Wallis and Douglas on the suspenseful western *Last Train from Gun Hill* (1959), about the rape of the hero's Indian wife. Afterward, he bailed out the troubled Ernest Hemingway fishing yarn *The Old Man and the Sea* after *High Noon* director Fred Zinnemann abandoned it. Sturges's last big MGM film was the Frank Sinatra World War II combat epic *Never So Few*. Sturges gave Steve McQueen his big break when Sammy Davis Jr. left the production.

Sturges's second phase began after he left MGM and signed on as a producer and director with Walter Mirisch and United Artists. The Mirisch brothers sought to give prestigious directors an opportunity to work without studio interference but with the backing of United Artists. Sturges's first project, *The Magnificent Seven*, benefited from his casting of Steve McQueen, Robert Vaughn, Charles Bronson, and James Coburn as gunslingers defending a small Mexican village from the depredations of ruthless bandits, led by Eli Wallach. An exhilarating western remake of Akira Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai* (1954), *The Magnificent Seven* has been cited as a model for the spaghetti westerns of the 1960s, with their mercenary heroes. In and around the time he made *The Magnificent Seven*, Sturges experimented with women's pictures such as the James Gould Cozzens bestseller *By Love Possessed* (1961), which starred Lana Turner, and *A Girl Named Tamiko* (1962), featuring France Nuyen.

Sturges swung back into the saddle for *Sergeants Three* (1962), a Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin western comedy remake of George Stevens's *Gunga Din* (1939). The 1963 release of *The Great Escape*, about a prison-camp escape from a German concentration camp by Allied prisoners, marked the zenith of his career. Nurtured for 11 years before the Mirischs agreed to produce it, the film was recalled by Sturges as his most personal project. Meanwhile, his adaptation of Alistair MacLean's best-selling doomsday thriller *The Satan Bug* (1965), one of the first science fiction nail-biters about biological warfare, scored with European audiences. All the kudos and clout Sturges acquired after *The Great Escape* collapsed, however, with the failures of the big-budgeted western spoof *The Hallelujah Trail* and his revisionist Wyatt Earp versus Ike Clanton epic *Hour of the Gun* (1967). After these failures, Sturges and the Mirisch brothers went their separate ways.

During his third phase, Sturges made a variety of films with different studios. He directed the Alistair MacLean Cold War blockbuster *Ice Station Zebra* (1968), with Rock Hudson, and helmed the NASA disaster epic *Marooned*, which anticipated Ron Howard's *Apollo 13*. Clint Eastwood invited him to helm *Joe Kidd* (1971), and Charles Bronson requested that he supervise his spaghetti western *The Valdez Horse* (1973). In 1974, Sturges directed *McQ*, a *Dirty Harry*-cloned police-procedural-mystery about

stolen narcotics and corruption with John Wayne careening through Seattle in a Trans Am. Sturges concluded his career with the international World War II thriller based on Jack Higgins's bestseller, *The Eagle Has Landed* (1977), which featured Michael Caine and Donald Sutherland. This "what if" action film depicted a top-secret assassination attempt on Winston Churchill. Thereafter, Sturges devoted his time to films that never materialized. He was preparing *Das Boot*, for instance, but dropped out of the production.

Sturges became one of the earliest directors to embrace CinemaScope. After *Bad Day at Black Rock*, he never made a film that did not utilize wide-screen lenses. He admitted a "definite like for low set-ups where there is something effective to shoot against." Although he began his career as an editor, Sturges printed most scenes on the first take, relied on little editing, and indulged in panning shots and crane movements. A past master at cultivating suspenseful situations and orchestrating complex shoot-outs, Sturges died on August 18, 1992.

Selected Filmography

The Eagle Has Landed (1976); *Joe Kidd* (1972); *Ice Station Zebra* (1968); *Hour of the Gun* (1967); *The Great Escape* (1963); *The Magnificent Seven* (1960); *The Old Man and the Sea* (1958); *Gunfight at the O.K. Corral* (1957); *Backlash* (1956); *Bad Day at Black Rock* (1955); *Escape from Fort Bravo* (1953); *Fast Company* (1953); *The Magnificent Yankee* (1950); *Mystery Street* (1950); *The Capture* (1950); *Walking Hills* (1949); *The Man Who Dared* (1946)

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—*Van Roberts*

STURGES, PRESTON. Renowned for penning some of the most highly regarded dialogue ever produced for American movies, Preston Sturges, born August 29, 1898, was the first writer to rise through the Hollywood studio ranks to become a director, inspiring later figures such as John Huston and Billy Wilder, who followed the same path. In a four-year blaze of glory he created seven classic comedies before falling from the studios' grace. Once trumpeted as a genius, one of the highest-paid men in America, and one of the few directors besides Hitchcock and DeMille recognized by the filmgoing public, he spent the last years of his life broke and neglected.

Possessing a "French point of humor expressed through an American vocabulary," thanks to a childhood divided between a cosmopolitan mother who dragged him through the high culture dens of Europe and a beloved, stockbroker stepfather in



Preston Sturges, screenwriter, director, and producer, arrives at work on the set of his current production, June 5, 1942, on the motor scooter he uses for travel between studio and home. (AP/Wide World Photos)

Chicago, Sturges focused in most of his films on the notion of success in America—though skeptical about how it is won, his characters display a deathless optimism and quintessentially American entrepreneurial spirit.

Sturges first gained notoriety in Hollywood by writing and selling a script to Fox in return for sole credit and a share of the film's profits, both unheard of in a system that assigned multiple writers to a picture. *The Power and the Glory* (1933) recounted the rise and fall of a railroad magnate (Spencer Tracy) through flashbacks deployed in chronologically asynchronous order, mimicking the subjective order of memory and ironically contrasting contradictions between the past and present. Sturges became a star screenwriter for Paramount, where he wrote *Easy Living* (1937), the first true Sturges comedy—a tale of circumstance determining success when a fur coat falls on a working girl—and the melodramatic romance *Remember the Night* (1940), in which a district attorney, in the process of reforming a thief, ends up becoming corrupt himself.

Determined to protect his work, Sturges offered to sell a script for a mere \$10—on the condition that he direct it. Paramount accepted, and *The Great McGinty* (1940) became the first Hollywood film bearing the credit “Written and Directed by”; the picture earned Sturges the first Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay. A political satire about a bum (Brian Donlevy) who uses a political party machine to rise to the ranks of the governor’s mansion, only to be undone when he tries to go straight, it defied the ideologies of both Horatio Alger and Frank Capra, suggesting that success may depend on something other than virtue and hard work. *Christmas in July* (1940), starring Dick Powell as an office boy duped into thinking he has won an advertising contest, portrays an America where talent is validated only by one’s success in business, itself a result of fortuitous circumstances.

The Lady Eve (1941), regarded by many as Sturges's best film, is a screwball comedy that stars Barbara Stanwyck as a cardsharp who twice romances millionaire ophiologist—an expert on snakes and reptiles—Henry Fonda, the first time for love and money and the second for vengeance. The film's success provided Sturges with the industry clout to make *Sullivan's Travels* (1941). Shot as the country slowly emerged from the Great Depression, and on the eve of its entry into World War II, the film is a self-reflexive examination of Sturges's attitudes on art and success. The narrative centers on the experiences of a widely successful director (Joel McCrea) who makes frivolous comedies but yearns to create serious films. Disguising himself as a hobo, he sets out on a cross-country trek in order to gather material for what he believes will be his cinematic masterpiece. What he discovers, though, humbles him, and he realizes that laughter can be the recipe that allows people to cope with a world that seems hopelessly out of control. He followed *Sullivan's Travels* with *The Palm Beach Story* (1942), a satirical celebration of the largesse of the rich. Featuring Claudette Colbert as a married adventuress, the production was also a showcase for Sturges's personal company of performers, an eclectic collection of talented actors who appeared in many of his films. *The Great Moment* (1944), a biopic of pioneering anesthesiologist William Morton, bucked the genre's usual pomposity by inserting comedic moments and returning to the scrambled flashback technique of *The Power and the Glory*. Unfortunately, the picture was clumsily edited by Paramount, and it turned out to be Sturges's first commercial failure.

Turning his attention to the war, Sturges made two community-based comedies starring Eddie Bracken, both satires of small-town Americana at its most neurotic. *The Miracle of Morgan's Creek* (1944) had Betty Hutton impregnated by an unknown soldier departing for the front. A manic, tortuous, and warm-hearted satire of the Nativity and the war effort, it was Sturges's biggest hit and showcased his directorial mastery of filming dialogue in fluid, unbroken takes and long tracking shots. *Hail the Conquering Hero* (1944)—with Bracken as a rejected Marine who returns home as the hero he actually is not—satirized mother and war hero worship and the democratic irrationality of crowds.

Fed up with Paramount's continuing interference, Sturges made the ill-fated decision to enter into a partnership with Howard Hughes. Casting silent comedian Harold Lloyd in *The Sin of Harold Diddlebock* (1947), Sturges used the inspiring final scenes of Lloyd's own *The Freshman* (1925) to open his picture. From there, the film went on to examine the life of the character some 20 years later, as he copes with one stultifying day after another functioning as a hopeless office drone and self-betrayer of his own all-American go-getter persona. Hughes ruined the film's chance of success by demanding cuts with which Sturges did not agree, and the director decided to move on to Twentieth Century-Fox. There he made *Unfaithfully Yours* (1948), which starred Rex Harrison as a symphony conductor who becomes suspicious of his wife and has three fantasies of revenge while conducting Rossini, Wagner, and Tchaikovsky. A sophisticated black comedy about male paranoia, class anxiety, and the irony of base emotions inspiring great art, the noirish, semiautobiographical film was a departure for Sturges

and turned out to be another commercial failure. So too *The Beautiful Blonde from Bashful Bend* (1949), a dispirited comic western that was little more than a vehicle for Betty Grable.

Out of step with the studios' artistically conservative postwar mood, Sturges moved to France and directed his last film, *The French They Are a Funny Race* (1955), a gentle study of the Anglo-Franco cultural divide. Sustained in his bleakest years by the belief that he would eventually recapture the glory of his halcyon days in Hollywood, Sturges, much like many of his characters, died on August 6, 1959, before that final dream could be realized.

Selected Filmography

The Beautiful Blonde from Bashful Bend (1949); *Unfaithfully Yours* (1948); *The Sin of Harold Diddlebock* (1947); *The Great Moment* (1944); *Hail the Conquering Hero* (1944); *The Miracle of Morgan's Creek* (1944); *The Palm Beach Story* (1942); *Sullivan's Travels* (1941); *The Lady Eve* (1941); *Christmas in July* (1940); *The Great McGinty* (1940)

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—*Ihsan Amanatullah*

TARANTINO, QUENTIN. Born March 27, 1963, in Knoxville, Tennessee, Quentin Tarantino is the only American filmmaker (so far) who has devoted himself exclusively to the nature of American violence as filtered through America's media. Essentially a film critic with a camera, Tarantino has positioned himself atop the growing pile of American independent filmmakers who have found success with audiences and critics alike.

After spending many years working in a Los Angeles area video store, and even more years watching and assimilating movies and television into his bloodstream, Tarantino debuted most auspiciously with *Reservoir Dogs* in 1992. The smart dialogue, precision casting, and iconographic depictions of violence separated this film from the rest of the pack. Hungry for more Tarantino, Hollywood turned two of his scripts—*True Romance* and *Natural Born Killers* (which was drastically rewritten)—into high-profile films for which he received as much attention as their respective directors, Tony Scott and Oliver Stone. The release of *Pulp Fiction*, however, rocketed Tarantino into superstardom. After winning the Palme d'Or at Cannes, *Pulp Fiction* became a critical favorite (even earning the adoration of those same critics who dismissed *Reservoir Dogs* as too violent), found a wide audience, revitalized the career of 1970s star John Travolta, and redirected the career of 1980s star Bruce Willis.

The question remains whether or not Tarantino (like Hawks, Kubrick, Godard, or anyone else he's been compared to) can find success outside this particular genre. As with Scorsese, the most unfortunate aspect of Tarantino's success is the plethora of talentless imitators who will follow. "Far from succumbing to easy cynicism, Tarantino achieves the remarkable feat of remaining a genre purist even as his films critique, embarrass, and crossbreed genre" (Gavin Smith, *Film Comment*, July-August 1994).

Selected Filmography

Inglourious Basterds (2009); *Sin City* (2005); *Kill Bill: Vol. 2* (2004); *Kill Bill: Vol. 1* (2003); *Jackie Brown* (1997); *Pulp Fiction* (1994); *Reservoir Dogs* (1992) *Four Rooms* (1995)

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—Daniel Curran

TAYLOR, ELIZABETH. An award-winning, British-American actress, Elizabeth Taylor was one of the most popular movie stars in the United States during the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. Her success in the movie industry, as both a talented actress and a popular subject of the tabloid media, earned her superstar status and solidified her role in American film history.

Born in London on February 27, 1932, Elizabeth Rosemond Taylor was the daughter of American-born parents, Francis Lenn Taylor and Sara Viola Warmbrodt. In 1941, at the start of World War II, the family relocated to Los Angeles. On September 18, 1941, a nine-year-old Taylor obtained her first movie contract with Universal Pictures for her film debut in *There's One Born Every Minute*. On October 15, 1942, she signed a contract with MGM to star as Priscilla in the box-office hit *Lassie Come Home*. In 1944, she appeared in the MGM movies *Jane Eyre* and *The White Cliffs of Dover*. It was her leading role as Velvet Brown, however, in the critically acclaimed *National Velvet* that catapulted Taylor to superstar status. Taylor starred in several additional movies during the 1940s that included *Courage of Lassie* (1946), *Life with Father* (1947), *Cynthia* (1947), *A Date with Judy* (1948), and *Julia Misbehaves* (1948). In 1949, she ended the decade with her last performance as a child actor in *Little Women*.

In 1949, Taylor also made her film debut as an adult actress in the drama *Conspirator*. In 1950, she co-starred with Spencer Tracy in the romantic comedy *Father of the Bride*. The success of the movie led to starring roles in several additional comedies, including *The Big Hangover* (1950), *Father of the Bride* (1950), *Father's Little Dividend* (1951), *Callaway Went Thataway* (1951), and *Love Is Better Than Ever* (1952). By 1955, Taylor had added seven additional starring movie roles to her acting credentials. These included *A Place in the Sun* (1951), *Ivanhoe* (1952), *The Girl Who Had Everything* (1953), *Rhapsody* (1954), *Elephant Walk* (1954), *Beau Brummel* (1954), and *The Last Time I Saw Paris* (1954). Then in 1956, the actress starred opposite Rock Hudson in the epic drama *Giant*. It was her portrayal of Susanna Drake in the Civil War drama *Raintree County* (1957), however, that earned Taylor her first Academy Award nomination for Best Actress in a Leading Role. In 1958, she co-starred alongside Paul Newman in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Her portrayal of Maggie in the megahit also earned her a second Academy Award nomination.

In 1960, she won her first Academy Award for Best Actress for her role as Gloria Wandrous in *Butterfield 8*. In 1963, Taylor co-starred with Richard Burton in *Cleopatra*, which eventually made a substantial profit after initially failing to attract audiences. Her \$1 million salary for her role in the movie made Taylor the highest-paid

actress in the United States during the 1960s. In 1966, she again teamed up with Burton in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* The movie earned her a second Academy Award for Best Actress.

During the 1970s, Taylor continued collect an average salary of \$1.25 million per picture. Some of her most notable movie roles during that decade included *Night Watch* (1973), *Ash Wednesday* (1973), *A Little Night Music* (1977), and *The Mirror Crack'd* (1980). Taylor also starred in several television movies during this period, including *Divorce His, Divorce Hers* (1973) and *Malice in Wonderland* (1985). In 1994, she returned to the big screen in *The Flintstones*.

Taylor's career as a movie star spanned six decades and included more than 50 motion pictures. Her personal life became as popular with the public as her movies. For decades, her superstar image and personal exploits overshadowed her acting talents. The public found Taylor's beauty, movie star lifestyle, and her eight marriages intriguing news items. Today, Taylor is considered an American movie star legend. Elizabeth Taylor passed away on March 23, 2011, after a long illness.



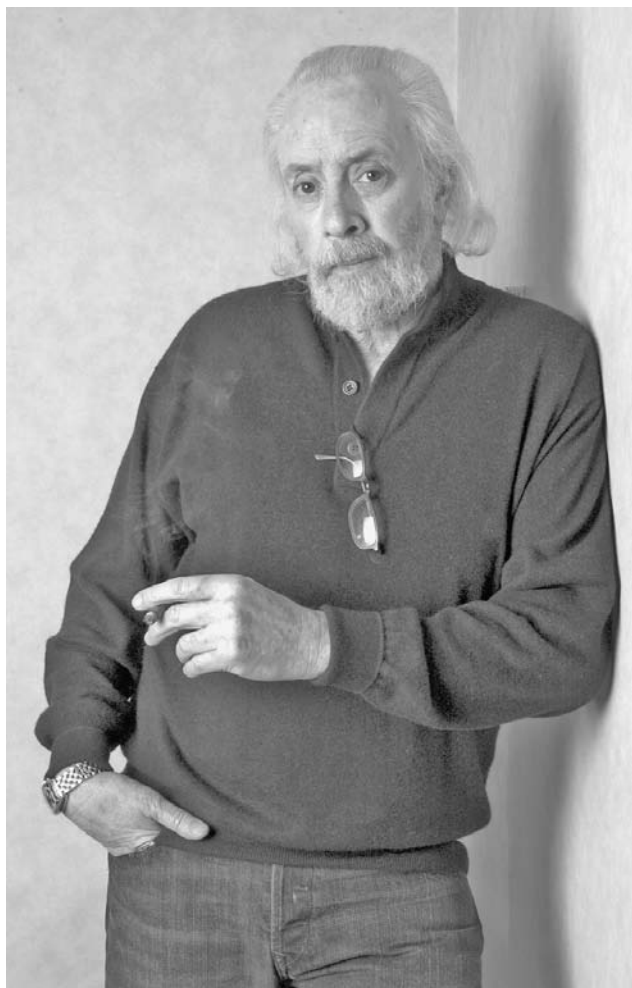
Actress Elizabeth Taylor in 1965. (Library of Congress)

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—Bernadette Zbicki Heiney

TOWNE, ROBERT. Almost every book on the subject of screenwriting points to Robert Towne's Academy Award-winning script for *Chinatown* (1974) as one of the best examples of this sort of work: a masterpiece of structure, character, and dialogue.



Screenwriter Robert Towne poses at the Regency Hotel in New York on March 7, 2006. (AP/Wide World Photos)

In addition to writing *Chinatown*, Towne also wrote screenplays for a number of other iconic films of the 1970s, including *The Last Detail* (1973) and *Shampoo* (1975), and script-doctored other well-known films of the late 1960s and 1970s, such as *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), *The Godfather* (1972), and *The Parallax View* (1974). In 1974, *Newsweek* declared Towne the hottest writer in Hollywood, suggesting that he was able to transform Hollywood genres by capturing the nation's sense of Watergate-era disillusionment.

By the late 1950s, Towne had tried college and had floated through a variety of uninspiring jobs before finding his way into an acting class. Significantly, his classmates included Jack Nicholson and Roger Corman, who would become the king of the low-budget Hollywood film. At the age of 21, Towne wrote and acted in *The Last Woman on Earth* (1960), a Corman production that Towne called a "dreadful science fiction movie." During the 1960s, Towne suffered from persistent and debilitating allergies, and he worked infrequently. He did

rewrite work for Corman, however, and also wrote for television shows such as *The Lloyd Bridges Show*, *The Richard Boone Show*, *The Outer Limits*, and *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* In 1965, Corman hired Towne to write the script for his film adaptation of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Tomb of Ligeia*. Impressed by an unproduced script that Towne had written for Corman, Warren Beatty brought him in to do rewrites for *Bonnie and Clyde*; Towne successfully reordered scenes, building into the picture a rising feeling of suspense as the film moved toward its startling conclusion.

Towne's first draft of *Chinatown*, completed for the producer Robert Evans, was resonant with Watergate-type themes. Evans, however, wanted Roman Polanski to direct the picture, and Polanski, deeply affected by the 1969 murder of his wife, Sharon Tate, by members of the Manson Family, saw something different in the material. In Towne's

first draft of *Chinatown*, the mythic L.A. locale remained hidden away, as the film's characters never actually arrived there; and the female protagonist, Evelyn Mulwray (Faye Dunaway), kills her father, Noah Cross (John Huston), who has raped and impregnated her. Polanski had something else in mind for the film, however; and, it seems, with his wife's murder still haunting him, insisted that the evil Noah Cross should live on while the abused and innocent Evelyn should die on the streets of Chinatown. Although the Watergate-like themes of political intrigue remained in the screenplay, Polanski finally prevailed and Towne's script was changed to reflect the director's vision. Two decades after the film was completed, and Towne had won his Oscar for his script, he finally admitted in a *Los Angeles Times* interview that Polanski was right about the ending.

During the 1980s, Towne became increasingly interested in directing. In 1982, he got his chance to move behind the camera with *Personal Best*, a film for which he also wrote the screenplay. An exploration of the physical and emotional pain experienced by world-class athletes—here, Olympic hopefuls training for the 1980 Moscow Games, which the United States boycotted—*Personal Best* proved to be controversial due to its depiction of the film's female lead, played convincingly by Mariel Hemingway, as bisexual. Towne was plagued by problems on the set, and at one point actually ran out of money before garnering alternative financing. Although *Personal Best* was eventually released, working on the picture cost Towne the opportunity to direct the film he really wanted to make: *Greystoke: The Legend of Tarzan, Lord of the Apes* (1984). Although he wrote the screenplay for the latter film, directorial responsibilities were turned over to Hugh Hudson, and the picture ended up being very different from the one that Towne had envisioned.

Although he had struggled to finish *Personal Best*, Towne nevertheless went on to write and direct what turned out to be four more unremarkable films: *Tequila Sunrise* (1988); *The Two Jakes* (1990); *Without Limits* (1998); and *Ask the Dust* (2006). He also continued to write screenplays for major Hollywood pictures, however, and to work as a script doctor on different projects. Towne, for instance, was brought in on four Tom Cruise vehicles: *Days of Thunder* (1990), *The Firm* (1993), *Mission: Impossible* (1996), and *Mission: Impossible II* (2000).

Selected Filmography

Mission: Impossible II (2000); *Without Limits* (1998); *Mission: Impossible* (1996); *Love Affair* (1994); *The Firm* (1993); *Days of Thunder* (1990); *Tequila Sunrise* (1988); *Frantic* (1988); *Tough Guys Don't Dance* (1987); *8 Million Ways to Die* (1986); *Greystoke: The Legend of Tarzan, Lord of the Apes* (1984); *Personal Best* (1982); *Heaven Can Wait* (1978); *Orca* (1977); *The Missouri Breaks* (1976); *Shampoo* (1975); *The Yakuza* (1974); *Chinatown* (1974); *The Parallax View* (1974); *The Last Detail* (1973); *The New Centurions* (1972); *Cisco Pike* (1972); *Drive, He Said* (1971); *Villa Rides* (1968); *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967)

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—Robert Arnett

TRUFFAUT, FRANÇOIS. François Truffaut was an award-winning director, a member of the French New Wave, advocate of the auteur theory, a movie critic, screenwriter, producer, and occasional actor. In a film career spanning a quarter of a century, he directed 25 films, some of the most lyrical and beloved of his generation.

François Roland Truffaut was born on February 6, 1932, to Janine de Montferrand and Roland Lévy, whom Truffaut never met. His mother's husband, Roland Truffaut, adopted him, but Truffaut spent his infancy mostly with others, especially with his grandmother, who died when he was ten. Rejected by his parents, he often escaped to stay with his friends and to go to the cinema.

Truffaut became an ardent moviegoer at an early age. He dropped out of school at age 14, and at 15, he founded a film club, Cercle cinémanie. He eventually came to the attention of the French critic André Bazin, who became his friend and protector. Bazin rescued Truffaut when, at 18, he tried to desert from the French army and was imprisoned. Bazin arranged for his release and gave him a job at the film magazine *Cahiers du cinéma*, where Truffaut published his first movie critique in 1953.

Truffaut's apprenticeship in the cinema came from watching movies and writing reviews—passionate, sometimes brutal, critiques. In what turned out to be a seminal essay in *Cahiers du cinéma* (no. 31, January 1954), entitled "A Certain Tendency of French Cinema," Truffaut denigrated the majority of French films, describing them as "your father's cinema." He praised visionary directors such as Jean Renoir, Roberto Rossellini, Ingmar Bergman, Luis Buñuel, and Alfred Hitchcock, declaring them *auteurs*—literally "authors" of their cinematic works—who had created distinctive filmic texts on which they had stamped their indelible signatures.

Truffaut's idea of the director as auteur proved inspirational to colleagues such as Jean-Luc Godard, Claude Chabrol, and Eric Rohmer, who sought to make films like their cinematic heroes. Along with Truffaut, directors like these—influenced by the grittiness of Italian neorealism, the invisible editing style of classical Hollywood cinema, and the philosophical Parisian culture of existentialism—began to produce what came to be called French New Wave (*La Nouvelle Vague*) films: iconoclastic, artistically experimental pictures produced in the 1950s and '60s.

Truffaut's criticism of French cinema led to his banishment from the Cannes Film Festival in 1958; but his first feature-length film, *Les quatre cents coups* (*The 400 Blows*), won him a Best Director award there the next year. The film begins a series of semiautobiographical pictures that paired Truffaut with actor Jean-Pierre L  aud, who portrayed Antoine Doinel, the alienated, rebellious adolescent who would become Truffaut's cinematic alter ego. For Truffaut, the narrative that traced its way through his Antoine Doinel cycle of films (*The 400 Blows* [1959], *Antoine and Colette* [1962],

Love at Twenty, *Stolen Kisses* [1968], *Bed and Board* [1970], and *Love on the Run* [1979]), gave existential expression to the attendant pleasures and pitfalls of his own, sometimes tortured coming-of-age experiences.

Two of Truffaut's most important, and well received, films followed *The 400 Blows* in the early 1960s. *Shoot the Piano Player* (1960) was Truffaut's homage to American detective films; a quirky and disturbing picture that mixes drama and dark comedy. Unpredictable and unexpected, *Shoot the Piano Player* offers the viewer flashbacks, extended voice-overs, out-of-sequence shots and startling jump cuts, brilliant use of music, and exquisite performances.

Truffaut had his first major commercial success with *Jules and Jim* (1962), a film that thoroughly charmed audiences. Focused on a trio of protagonists—two men who fall in love with the same ineffable women, the embodiment of the eternal, enigmatic, mutable feminine—the picture explores moments of youthful abandon, love, and freedom.

Later in the 1960s and early 1970s, Truffaut made a series of films that did not have the critical appeal of his first three films. Adapted from a 1953 Ray Bradbury science fiction novel, *Fahrenheit 451* (1966) explores themes of censorship and book burning, and the conflagration of society that ensues when these things are allowed to happen. The next two films combine genres: the suspense thriller complicated by the love story. In *The Bride Wore Black* (1968), a woman who is widowed by five men on their wedding days, takes methodical revenge on each of them. In *Mississippi Mermaid* (1970), a woman fakes the identity of a mail-order bride who has been sent for by a rich plantation owner, who quickly falls in love with the imposter.

With *The Wild Child* (1970), Truffaut returned to the filmmaking style of his earlier films. The picture is based on an historical incident in which a child is found living in the wild; Truffaut cast himself in the role of the doctor who patiently tries to tame and socialize the child. Reminiscent of *The 400 Blows* in its black-white austerity and documentary approach, *The Wild Child* presents viewers with an unsentimental examination of the pain and pleasures of human contact. Described as a poem in praise of making movies, *Day for Night* (1973) is a self-referential picture about the working processes and ephemeral communities that are formed during the making of a film. Truffaut plays the director of the film-within-the film to Jean-Pierre Léaud's temperamental young "star."

François Truffaut left an indelible mark on cinema, both as a writer/film critic and as a director who created some of the most luminous and humanistic films of the twentieth-century. He died of a brain tumor on October 21, 1984, and is buried in Montmartre Cemetery in Paris.

Selected Filmography

Confidentially Yours (1983); *The Woman Next Door* (1981); *The Last Metro* (1980); *Love on the Run* (1979); *The Green Room* (1978); *The Man Who Loved Women* (1977); *Small Change* (1976); *The Story of Adele H* (1975); *Day for Night* (1973); *Bed & Board* (1970); *The Wild Child* (1970); *Mississippi Mermaid* (1969); *Stolen Kisses* (1968); *The Bride Wore Black* (1968); *Fahrenheit 451* (1966); *Jules and Jim* (1962); *The 400 Blows* (1959)

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—Arbolina L. Jennings

VALENTINO, RUDOLPH. Probably the most famous film star of the silent era, Rudolph Valentino was the classic leading man whose good looks attracted millions of female fans and whose untimely death sparked an outpouring of grief unmatched in his day. Although he had a relatively short career, Valentino's persona and his screen presence made him a true Hollywood icon whose influence was felt for generations.

Born Rodolfo Alfonso Raffaello Piero Filiberto Guglielmi in Castellaneta, Italy, on May 6, 1895, Valentino immigrated to the United States through Ellis Island in 1913. Speaking little English, he rented a small room in an Italian neighborhood and took a number of mundane jobs in order to survive, including work as a busboy, waiter, and gardener. A talented dancer, he found employment in New York nightclubs, where he achieved a modest degree of local fame. Trading on his good looks, Valentino also reportedly worked as a gigolo, entertaining lonely New York society women. Eventually the young dancer took a job with a traveling musical production that toured the western United States, and after the outfit disbanded he lived briefly in San Francisco before moving to Hollywood, where, on the advice of a friend, he decided to pursue a career in the emerging film industry. His first film appearance was as an extra in *Alimony* (1917), followed by a number of small roles for Metro Pictures with directors usually casting him as a villain. Valentino's big break came in 1921 when he was cast in a lead role in *Four Horseman of the Apocalypse* (1921), one of the top money-making films of the silent era. In the film, Valentino famously dances the tango with an actress in one of the most notable and scandalous movie sequences of the period. The scene made Valentino famous and helped create the "Latin lover" screen persona that would win him legions of fans. Valentino soon established himself as a new type of leading man: an irresistible combination of sex appeal and sensitivity that left female moviegoers of the Roaring Twenties spellbound. For Valentino, more success followed, as he landed starring roles in *Camille* (1921) and *The Conquering Power* (1921).

After arriving in Hollywood, and especially after his fame began to spread, Valentino's personal life became more tumultuous. Unfounded rumors dating from his days as a New York gigolo suggested that America's leading sex symbol might be homosexual or bisexual, and the star was married in 1919 to actress Jean Acker, who turned out



Silent film actor Rudolph Valentino (1895–1926), considered the first male sex symbol of the motion picture industry. (Library of Congress)

to be a lesbian. Valentino eventually divorced Acker and in 1923 married set designer and part-time actress Natacha Rambova, but since he did not wait a year after his divorce to remarry, as required by California law, he was forced to fight off charges of bigamy. The ambitious Rambova also tried to take charge of Valentino's career, which ultimately led to a great deal of controversy.

Unhappy with his salary at Metro, Valentino left the studio and signed with Famous Players-Lasky, which would eventually evolve into Paramount Pictures. There, Valentino starred in *The Sheik* (1921), the landmark film that transformed him from a popular star into an international film icon. Public reaction to the movie, which cast Valentino as a great lover, also exposed the nature of his massive appeal. Male moviegoers, many of whom felt threatened by Valentino, hated *The Sheik*, ridiculed Valentino and his flamboyant costumes, and rou-

tinely questioned the star's masculinity. In contrast, female fans swooned over him, watching the film again and again. For Valentino, *The Sheik* was a doubled-edged sword that brought him worldwide fame but also left him forever typecast. He made several more films with Famous Players-Lasky, including *Beyond the Rocks* (1922), where he played opposite screen siren Gloria Swanson, and *Blood and Sand* (1922), a critically acclaimed picture in which he played a Spanish bullfighter. For his entire career Valentino, with some justification, felt financially underappreciated by the studios, and was in almost constant conflict with producers over his salary. At one point he walked out on Famous Players-Lasky, which led to the studio filing a lawsuit against him. Shortly before his death, Valentino signed with United Artists, where he made his last film, *Son of the Sheik*, in 1926.

Valentino's untimely demise contributed to his legend. On August 15, 1926, he collapsed at a New York hotel and was hospitalized with a perforated ulcer. After successful surgery to repair the problem, he developed peritonitis and died on August 23, 1926, at the age of 31. Valentino's death was one of the most significant American

cultural events of the 1920s. More than 100,000 fans almost rioted at the star's New York City funeral, and afterwards his body was taken by train to California for a second memorial service. Valentino was laid to rest in Hollywood Memorial Park Cemetery. One of Hollywood's most cherished legends holds that for decades on the anniversary of Valentino's death, a mysterious female admirer visited the cemetery to leave a single red rose on the star's grave.

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—Ben Wynne

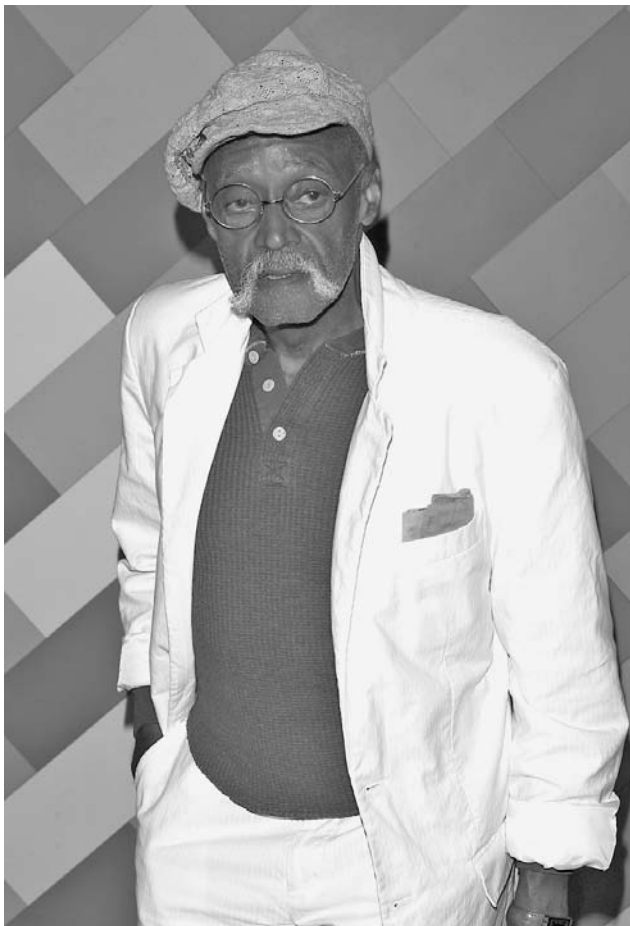
VAN PEEBLES, MELVIN. Melvin Van Peebles can claim many titles but is best known as the creator of the film *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* (1971). As a marketing master with a knack for infiltrating arenas wherein he has had no previous experience, he has always insisted upon his own vision. Both celebrated as “the father of American independent film” and vilified as the progenitor of blaxploitation, his position in film history is as undeniable as it is contested (Alexander, 2003).

Melvin Peebles was born on August 21, 1932, on the South Side of Chicago. After receiving a degree in literature from Ohio Wesleyan University, he joined the Air Force. He moved to San Francisco following his military service, where he worked as a streetcar operator and married Maria Marx, a white woman from an affluent family with whom he fathered three children.

Van Peebles made two short independent films in 1957, *Three Pickup Men for Herrick* and *Sunlight*. Unable to secure opportunities in Hollywood, however, he moved his family to Holland and studied astronomy at the University of Amsterdam. While his marriage dissolved, Van Peebles's passion for filmmaking returned while in Holland, and he joined the Dutch National Theatre. His earlier shorts were discovered by Henry Langlois, an associate of the Cinémathèque Française based in Paris, and Van Peebles eventually left Holland for the magically French city (Chaffin-Quiray, 2002).

While in Paris, Van Peebles learned French and became a novelist, ultimately publishing five books, including *La Permission*, which later became his first feature film, *The Story of a Three-Day Pass* (1967) (originally released in France as *La permission*). The film, about a black army soldier who has a weekend romance with a white woman while on leave in Paris, won the Critic's Choice Award at the 1967 San Francisco Film Festival (Taft, 1999); it also opened the door to Hollywood for the director.

Following the success of *Three-Day Pass*, Columbia Pictures tapped him to direct the racial satire *Watermelon Man* (1970); although he eventually completed the



Actor Melvin Van Peebles at MoMA's 41st Annual Party in the Garden at the Museum of Modern Art on May 26, 2009 in New York City. (Getty Images)

project, he quarreled with studio heads throughout the production (Angio, 2005). It may be that the best decision Van Peebles made in regard to *Watermelon Man* was the casting of black actor Godfrey Cambridge, who most critics felt delivered a triumphant performance despite the film's limitations (Donaldson, 2003).

Desiring more autonomy, and wanting to make films that were culturally relevant, Van Peebles set about making the picture that many feel is his most significant one, *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song*. Made without major studio support, the picture was shot in Southern California in just three weeks on a \$500,000 budget; it went on to make \$10 million by the end of its first theatrical run, despite, or, perhaps because of, its X-rating from the MPAA (Lawrence, 2008). Van Peebles performed most of the key creative duties on the project, including playing the lead role of "Sweetback," a black sex performer who murders two policemen and goes on the run. Although a box-

office success, the film was largely condemned by the black intelligentsia (Guerrero, 1993). Many film historians and critics have argued that, along with *Cotton Comes to Harlem* (1970) and Gordon Parks's *Shaft* (1971), *Sweetback* established the paradigm for the blaxploitation wave of the 1970s as well as the "hood film cycle" of the early 1990s (Watkins, 1998).

A true Renaissance man, Van Peebles went on to create several plays including the musicals *Ain't Supposed to Die a Natural Death* (1971), which was nominated for seven Tony Awards and was eventually adapted for the screen, as well as *Don't Play Us Cheap* (1972). He also recorded several music albums and worked as a New York City stock trader for a short time. He directed four more feature-length films: *Identity Crisis* (1989), *Gang in Blue* (1996/co-directed with his son Mario), *Bellyful* (2000), and *Confessions of a Ex-Doofus-Itchyfooted Mutha* (2008). Although he has remained busy

writing, acting, and performing, none of his creative ventures have matched the success of *Sweetback*.

Selected Filmography

Confessions of a Ex-Doofus-Itchyfooted Mutha (2008); *Bellyful* (2000); *Identity Crisis* (1989); *Don't Play Us Cheap* (1973); *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* (1971); *Watermelon Man* (1970); *The Story of a Three-Day Pass* (1968); *Cinq cent balles* (1963); *Three Pickup Men for Herrick* (1957); *Sunlight* (1957)

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—Mikal Gaines

VARDA, AGNÈS. One of the most influential female directors in France, Agnès Varda has been an innovative voice in fiction and documentary filmmaking since the mid-1950s. Winner of the 1985 Venice Film Festival Golden Lion (for *Vagabond*, 1985) and the 2001 National Society of Film Critics Award for Best Non-Fiction Film (for *The Gleaners and I*, 2000), Varda has directed over 30 films, ranging from a documentary short on the Black Panthers (*Black Panthers*, 1968) to a character study of her friend, the actress Jane Birkin (*Jane B. par Agnès V.*, 1987–1988). Varda's irreverent style has been characterized over the decades by avant-garde techniques, a rich art-historical vocabulary, and a concern for women's experiences.

Born Arlette Varda on May 30, 1928, in Ixelles, Belgium, Varda took an indirect path to a directing career. While studying art history at the École du Louvre, she began to take night classes in photography. In 1951, Varda found work as a photographer under Jean Vilar at the Théâtre National Populaire (TNP). Varda's first film, *La Pointe Courte* (1954), is widely considered a precursor to the French New Wave. Made on a shoestring budget with TNP actors and nonprofessional residents from the seaside

village where the shooting took place, the film intertwines the story of a troubled couple with the villagers' struggles to stay afloat. Varda's economical production strategy, as well as the film's attention to everyday life, won praise from critics like *Cahiers du cinéma* founder André Bazin, who championed parallel tendencies in the Italian neorealist masterworks of the previous decade.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Varda maintained an ambiguous relationship with the crowd at *Cahiers*, the institutional center of the New Wave. Film historians typically place Varda in the looser Left Bank Group along with *Pointe Courte* collaborator Alain Resnais, Chris Marker, and Varda's husband Jacques Demy, pointing to the Left Bank directors' shared interest in modernist literature and left-wing politics in order to distinguish them from François Truffaut and other critic-directors at *Cahiers*. In Varda's case, differences also stemmed from her background in art history rather than at the cinema clubs and film journals cropping up in postwar Paris. Having completed *La Pointe Courte*, Varda later remarked that she had not seen 25 films to that point in her life. Yet her collaborations with Jean-Luc Godard indicate a creative energy shared across the Seine. *Cléo from 5 to 7* (1961), Varda's next feature film, starred Godard in a film-within-a-film—a wink, perhaps, at Godard's quoting of other directors in his own New Wave efforts.

The relationships between women, visual representation, and image culture stimulated Varda from the outset. The short *L'Opéra-Mouffe* (1958), which Varda made while pregnant, intercut shots of the bustling markets on Paris's Rue Mouffetard with visual treatments of fertility. *Cléo from 5 to 7* dramatized 90 tense minutes in the life of a glamorous singer as she awaits the results of a cancer test. Some critics have interpreted Cléo's meandering journey around Paris as mirroring a psychic transition from male-guided involvement with her own image (she gazes frequently at her reflections in mirrors) to an outwardly focused interest in the people she meets. However, Varda also disrupts the idea that we can easily access the protagonist's psyche: Cléo's continually changing costume and affect complicate the possibility of capturing singular truths about her.

In line with her complex feminism, the filmmaker has explored the possibilities—and difficulties—of representing marginalized subjects. *Vagabond* retraces the wanderings of a young vagrant, discovered frozen to death early in the film, through a series of interviews with the people she has encountered on the road. Varda reprised her attention to France's "new poor" in *The Gleaners and I* (2000). The documentary interweaves footage of present-day gleaners salvaging harvest leftovers, a robed magistrate in a field explaining the sixteenth-century law that established the right to glean in France, eco-radicals who live out of the trash, and nineteenth-century paintings of gleaners. Varda plays with the idea of gleaning as a metaphor for creation, but the director has insisted that the film's artistic meditations are not more central to its message than the cases of subsistence gleaning it documents.

Varda continues to work against the grain of the French film industry by producing her own films. She has coined the term *cinécriture*, or cine-writing, to encompass the variety of editorial decisions undertaken during the creative process of making a film. From the crest of the New Wave to the present, an interplay of formal experimentation and social engagement has fueled Varda's vital and inventive filmmaking.

Selected Filmography

The Beaches of Agnès (2008); *Quelques veuves de Noirmoutier* (2006); *Cinévardaphoto* (2004); *Ydessa, les ours et etc.* (2004); *Le lion volatil* (2003); *The Gleaners and I: Two Years Later* (2002); *The Gleaners & I* (2000); *The Young Girls of Rochefort* (1967); *Jacquot de Nantes* (1991); *Jane B. for Agnes V.* (1988); *Le petit amour* (1988); *T'as de beaux escaliers tu sais* (1986); *Vagabond* (1985); *The So-called Caryatids* (1984); *Ulysse* (1982); *Documenteur* (1981); *Mur murs* (1981); *One Sings, the Other Doesn't* (1977); *Daguerréotypes* (1976); *Plaisir d'amour en Iran* (1976); *Women Reply* (1975); *Lions Love* (1969) *Huey* (1968); *Far from Vietnam* (1967); *Oncle Yanco* (1967); *The Creatures* (1966); *Le bonheur* (1965); *Elsa la rose* (1965); *Salut les cubains* (1963); *Cleo from 5 to 7* (1962); *Les fiancés du pont Mac Donald ou (Méfiez-vous des lunettes noires)* (1961); *O saisons, ô châteaux* (1958); *Du côté de la côte* (1958); *La cocotte d'azur* (1958); *Diary of a Pregnant Woman* (1958); *La Pointe Courte* (1955)

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—Diana Lemberg

VIDOR, KING. Less venerated than John Ford or Howard Hawks, it may be argued that King Vidor was their equal as a chronicler of America's national character. He considered his three great subjects to be war, wheat, and steel; his overriding concern was with the place of the individual in American society, navigating between populism and solipsism and unity and disillusionment in regard to community and land.

A Texan with Hungarian roots born February 8, 1894, Vidor was an early independent filmmaker, his first features influenced by Christian Science and D. W. Griffith's rural lyricism. His eventual affiliation with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer bore fruit with *The Big Parade* (1925), the film that established the studio, the highest grosser of the 1920s, and the first Hollywood effort to treat World War I realistically from an average soldier's perspective. The film conveyed the horror of conflict with visionary scenes—such as the death march through Belleau Wood—timed with a metronome to achieve what Vidor called silent music.

He used his clout to make a less commercial masterpiece, *The Crowd* (1928), a portrait of an average man hoping to make it big in the city. Unprecedented in documenting quotidian routines, frustrations, and despair, the picture would ultimately inspire the filmmakers of the neorealist movement. Vidor seamlessly merged realism (including hidden-camera footage of street life) and German-derived Expressionism, as in his famous tracking shot in which the camera traveled up and through an office building to reveal the protagonist seated at one of an endless, rigidly arrayed collection of desks.

Asked by William Randolph Hearst to make films for Hearst's mistress Marion Davies, Vidor switched gears to make three comedies, including *Show People* (1928),



King Vidor's prodigious career as a film director began in the era of the American silent movie and continued at a furious pace into the age of the "talkies." Over the 41 years of his career he made 56 feature films. (Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

a genial satire of Hollywood pretentiousness that included an appearance by the director himself. Furthering his reputation for artistic risk-taking, he entered the sound era by deferring his salary to assemble an all-black cast for the groundbreaking semimusical *Hallelujah!* (1929), which centered on the rural southern intersection of sin, revivalist religion, and family life, and earned praise for its (at the time) sensitive portrayal of African American culture.

His later films alternated between innovation and what he considered banal assignment. Rather ironically, the naturalist tenement drama *Street Scene* (1931) preceded a loose trilogy of films devoted to urban characters who relocate to farms seeking revitalization through rural life. Bookended by the heartland affection of *The Stranger's Return* (1933) and the assimilation struggles of *The Wedding Night* (1935), *Our Daily Bread* (1934) displayed Vidor's almost pantheistic faith in the land. Made out-

side the studio system with Vidor's own money, *Daily Bread* details the formation of a farming co-op that rejects both democracy and socialism, and thus shows the elusiveness of Vidor's politics: he was instrumental in forming both the Directors Guild of America and the Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals.

Vidor ranged across genres in a way that was unusual among directors. His feel for agrarian life anchored the Kansas sequences of *The Wizard of Oz* (1939). One of a number of directors who worked on the picture, Vidor set the camera and Judy Garland in flowing motion for her exquisite, iconic "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" scene. He demonstrated his mastery of melodrama in the male weepie *The Champ* (1931) and the remake of *Stella Dallas* (1937); and he won critical acclaim with *The Citadel* (1938), a British medical drama, and *H.M. Pulham, Esq.* (1941), which followed an unremarkable, businessman protagonist as he looks back over his routine, conformist life.

Vidor's dynamic faith in American progress was expressed in diverse ways—its brutal consequences depicted in images of Indian massacres in *Northwest Passage* (1940) and its glorious affirmation characterized in *An American Romance* (1944), the director's contribution to the war effort. Vidor went on to direct the western romance *Duel in the Sun* (1946); and adopting noir elements he created the cinematic version of Ayn Rand's Nietzschean, anti-Socialist, radically individualistic *The Fountainhead* (1949), a film that reflected his own struggles with studio heads to get his pictures made. Interestingly, Vidor explored this notion of the individual battling against the tyrannical force of the collective in the melodramas *Beyond the Forest* (1949) and *Ruby Gentry* (1952), both of which followed female protagonists (Bette Davis as a disgruntled small-town housewife and Jennifer Jones confronting corrupt tidewater high society) striving to fulfill their desires from within the boundaries of their own stifling communities. Lacking the advantages of Vidor's male heroes, they have no choice but to make themselves into monsters.

Vidor ended his commercial career with the epics *War and Peace* (1956) and *Solomon and Sheba* (1959). Unable to find backing for his more personal projects, Vidor's last films were the independent documentaries *Truth and Illusion: An Introduction to Metaphysics* (1964) and *The Metaphor* (1980), two pictures that expanded on his notion that America operated under a peculiar divine mandate: the divinity of self—the only place where Vidor believed God could be found. Vidor died on November 1, 1982.

Selected Filmography

Solomon and Sheba (1959); *War and Peace* (1956); *Man without a Star* (1955); *Ruby Gentry* (1952); *Japanese War Bride* (1952); *Lighting Strikes Twice* (1951); *Beyond the Forest* (1949); *Fountainhead, The* (1949); *Duel in the Sun* (1946); *An American Romance* (1944); *The Wizard of Oz* (1939); *The Citadel* (1938); *Stella Dallas* (1937); *Texas Rangers* (1936); *Bird of Paradise* (1932); *Billy the Kid* (1930); *The Crowd* (1928); *The Big Parade* (1925); *Wild Oranges* (1924); *Dusk to Dawn* (1922); *The Sky Pilot* (1921); *The Turn in the Road* (1919); *Grand Military Parade* (1913)

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—*Ihsan Amanatullah*

VON STROHEIM, ERICH. Erich von Stroheim was a prominent—and controversial—figure during the early years of Hollywood. For five decades he was a director and actor as well as “The Man You Love to Hate.” In great part a creation of his own imagination, Stroheim reflected in real life the myth machine that is Hollywood.



Erich von Stroheim elevated the genre of silent film, laboring over descriptive and psychological detail while ignoring production and budgetary constraints. (Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

Stroheim was born Erich Oswald Hans Carl Maria Stroheim in Vienna on September 22, 1885. Although the product of a Jewish middle-class family, he never fit into that lifestyle (his father was a hat maker), nor did he do well in the Austrian military (deserting). In 1909, he arrived at Ellis Island, New York, where he added the “von” to his name in order to impress the officials there (Koszarski, 1987). For the next three years he worked in a series of odd jobs before heading west to San Francisco. In 1913, he married Margaret Knox, but the marriage did not last. He eventually moved to Hollywood as the reinvented Erich von Stroheim, the son of a German baroness and Austrian count. The myth of his own background would remain secret until uncovered years later by two of his biographers (Koszarski, 1983; and Lennig, 2000). Beginning in 1915, he appeared as an extra in

several films, including D. W. Griffith’s *Intolerance*. During World War I, Stroheim was cast as the “horrible Hun” in several American films, including *The Hun Within* and *The Heart of Humanity*.

His career took a turn in 1919 when he convinced Universal Studios head Carl Laemmle to let him star and direct in his own film, *The Pinnacle*, later renamed *Blind Husbands*. During the next 10 years, Stroheim directed a total of nine films, for both Universal and Goldwyn. His uncompromising style—which triggered constant conflicts with powerful people—led to the end of his career as a director in 1929, while simultaneously cementing his legacy.

Stroheim’s films were characterized by lavish sets, historical backdrops, obsessive attention to detail, and innovative use of lighting and film composition, as well as a no-holds-barred attitude toward production. It was this later trait that caused him the most trouble as he consistently went well over budget on his films. In essence he was the consummate artist—producing art for art’s sake regardless of the consequences.

Two films stand out during this period. *Foolish Wives* (1921) is a dark satire set in Vienna just before and during the Great War. It was during this production that

Stroheim's obsessive attention to detail manifested itself when he was arrested by Treasury agents for printing French currency to add realism to casino scenes set in Monte Carlo. Stroheim's second major work during this time is considered by film critics to be his masterpiece. *Greed* (1924) was filmed for the Goldwyn Company. Set in San Francisco, the movie is an excellent example of 1920s cinematic naturalism. Originally nine hours long, the film was reduced—over Stroheim's strenuous objections—to just over two hours in length, when the Goldwyn Company merged with Metro Pictures in 1924. Considered an intensely graphic film for its time, it disturbed audiences and critics with its frank depiction of the corrupting influence of money and greed on the American way of life (Tibbetts, 2002).

Stroheim's last studio film was *The Merry Widow* (1925). Once again production cost overruns plagued the film. Despite this, the movie was a box-office hit, and Stroheim parlayed its success into a contract to direct *The Wedding March* (1927), with independent producer Pat Powers. Stroheim again ran well over budget, and the picture was released in an abbreviated form. During the filming of his last movie *Queen Kelly*, financed by Joseph P. Kennedy, Stroheim's obsession with realism and graphic portrayals of brothels and incest led actress Gloria Swanson to demand that Kennedy fire him. He did, and Stroheim's directing career was over.

For the remaining years of his life Stroheim acted in numerous films, carefully cultivating the image of "The Man You Love to Hate." Most notable during this time were his roles in *The Lost Squadron* (1932) and *La Grand illusion* (1937). After World War II ended, Stroheim moved to France with his companion Denise Vernac and spent the rest of his life acting and writing. He died of cancer on May 12, 1957, in Maurepas France. His legacy as a founder of American realist cinema, as well as his passion and commitment to film, cement Stroheim's place as one of the great directors of the 1920s.

Selected Filmography

Napoléon (1955); *The Infiltrator* (1955); *Alert in the South* (1953); *The Other Side of Paradise* (1953); *Sunset Blvd.* (1950); *Devil and the Angel* (1946); *One Does Not Die That Way* (1946); *The Mask of Dijon* (1946); *Scotland Yard Investigator* (1945); *The Great Flamarion* (1945); *Storm over Lisbon* (1944); *The Lady and the Monster* (1944); *The North Star* (1943); *Five Graves to Cairo* (1943); *Gambling Hell* (1942); *So Ends Our Night* (1941); *I Was an Adventuress* (1940); *Thunder over Paris* (1940); *Threats* (1940); *Personal Column* (1939); *Immediate Call* (1939); *The World Will Shake* (1939); *It Happened in Gibraltar* (1938); *Ultimatum* (1938); *Boys' School* (1938); *The Lafarge Case* (1938); *Under Secret Orders* (1937); *The Alibi* (1937); *The Grand Illusion* (1937); *Marthe Richard* (1937); *The Crime of Doctor Crespi* (1935); *Crimson Romance* (1934); *Fugitive Road* (1934); *As You Desire Me* (1932); *The Lost Squadron* (1932); *Friends and Lovers* (1931); *Three Faces East* (1930); *The Great Gabbo* (1929); *The Wedding March* (1928); *The Honeymoon* (1928); *Greed* (1924); *Foolish Wives* (1922); *Blind Husbands* (1919); *The Heart of Humanity* (1918); *The Hun Within* (1918); *Hearts of the World* (1918); *The Unbeliever* (1918); *Who Goes There?* (1917); *Draft 258* (1917); *Panthea* (1917); *The Social Secretary* (1916); *Intolerance: Love's Struggle Throughout the Ages* (1916); *The Flying Torpedo* (1916); *Old Heidelberg* (1915); *Farewell to Thee* (1915)

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—Charles Johnson

WASHINGTON, DENZEL. Happily married to Pauletta Washington and the father of four children, Denzel Washington is among the most versatile Hollywood actors working today. In his numerous films, he has demonstrated an ability to embody character types as dissimilar as Malcolm X and a corrupt cop. Such versatility makes it difficult to categorize him.

Denzel Washington was born on December 28, 1954, in New York, and took up acting while attending Fordham University, performing in student productions and landing a part as the 18-year-old boyfriend of Wilma Rudolph in the made-for-television biopic *Wilma* (1977). After completing his BA, Washington went to San Francisco's American Conservatory Theatre to study acting. After only a year, however, he left for Hollywood. Unhappy there, Washington left shortly after he arrived, returning to New York, where he took stage roles and appeared in the made-for-television movie *Flesh and Blood* (1979).

The actor hoped *Flesh and Blood* would provide him with the break he needed to leap to the big screen. His career remained stalled, however, and he considered giving up, taking a job with the county recreation department. Before reporting to work, he landed the role of Malcolm X in an Off-Broadway production of Laurence Holder's *When the Chickens Come Home to Roost*, a fictional account of a meeting between Elijah Muhammad, the Nation of Islam leader, and Malcolm X. The production did not last, but the job gave Washington the luxury of seeking more roles as an actor. He eventually landed parts in *Carbon Copy* (1981), a film comedy that explores the experiences of a white businessman with an illegitimate African American son, and in a stage production of Charles Fuller's *A Soldier's Play*, a World War II drama about racial conflict. His performance in *A Soldier's Play* earned Washington an Obie Award, while his turn as Roger Porter in *Carbon Copy* caught the attention of Bruce Paltrow, who was looking for someone to play Dr. Philip Chandler on the television series *St. Elsewhere*.

From 1982 to 1988, Washington appeared on *St. Elsewhere* while also pursuing a movie career. Earning steady money from working on the television series, Washington finally began to land parts in films. These included roles as Arnold Billing, a lobbyist for Middle Eastern Oil, in *Power* (1986); as the South African freedom fighter Steve



Denzel Washington, winner of the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor for his role in *Glory*, from 1989. He would go on to become the first African American man to win an Academy Award as Best Actor, for his performance in *Training Day*, 2001. (AP/Wide World Photos)

Biko in *Cry Freedom* (1987); and as Reuben James, the lead character in *For Queen and Country* (1988). After leaving *St. Elsewhere* in 1988, Washington's acting career continued to blossom: he accepted the lead role in *The Mighty Quinn* (1989) and a supporting part in *Glory* (1989), in which he played a former slave fighting for the Union army. The latter performance won him an Oscar for Best Actor in a Supporting Role.

Washington now began to be cast in starring roles. In the comedy *Heart Condition* (1990), he played a ghost who haunts the bigot who has received his heart in a transplant operation; and in *Mo' Better Blues* (1990), a Spike Lee production that Lee wrote with Washington in mind, he played Bleek Gilliam, a man who becomes a popular blues musician. It was his performance in the title role of Lee's *Malcolm X* (1992), however, that proved that Washington could carry a film. Solidifying his reputation as one of the best actors in Hollywood, and one of the most popular, Washington followed *Malcolm X* with *The Pelican Brief* (1993), an action-adventure movie adapted from a John Grisham novel and co-starring Julia Roberts; *Philadelphia* (1993), in which he played an attorney who defends an AIDS victim (Tom Hanks) who is unfairly dismissed from his job; *The Preacher's Wife* (1996), starring opposite Whitney Houston; and *The Hurricane* (1999), a biopic about Rubin Carter, the middleweight boxer who was unjustly convicted of murder in 1966.

The Hurricane was followed in 2000 by *Remember the Titans*, which deals with a recently integrated southern high school and the reactions of players and townspeople to the arrival of their new black head football coach. In 2001, he starred as a brutal,

corrupt, and highly effective plainclothes cop in *Training Day*. His extraordinary performance earned Washington a Best Actor Oscar; he was only the second African American to win the award (Sidney Poitier was the first). In 2002, Washington turned director for *Antwone Fisher*, in which he also co-starred as Dr. Jerome Davenport. He continues to work in feature films, including *The Manchurian Candidate* (2004), *Inside Man* (2006), *American Gangster* (2006), *The Great Debaters* (2007), and *The Taking of Pelham 123* (2009).

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—Albert Rolls

WATERS, JOHN. John Waters occupies a unique position in the pantheon of American movie directors. From the start Waters wanted mainstream success, but to reach his goal he filmed some of the most outrageously offensive scenes in the history of cinema. Today, Waters is regarded as an iconic figure whose early films anticipate the current popularity of the trash culture aesthetic.

Born in Baltimore, Maryland, on April 22, 1946, John Samuel Waters Jr. grew up fascinated by car accidents and movie villains, while dreaming of a career in show business. He attended Catholic schools, but frequently cut classes to see movies that the nuns warned him to avoid. Through neighborhood friends Waters met the idiosyncratic characters that would become the Dreamlanders, the cast and crew of his low-budget films. Waters's early efforts, *Hag in a Black Leather Jacket* (1964), *Roman Candles* (1966), and *Eat Your Makeup* (1968), showed the influence of underground filmmakers like Jack Smith, Kenneth Anger, Andy Warhol, and the Kuchar brothers. His first feature-length film, *Mondo Trasho* (1969), starred the actor most closely associated with Waters, the 300-pound transvestite Divine (née Harris Glenn Milstead).

During the 1970s, as Waters's filmmaking skills and creative vision matured, he gained national recognition for his increasingly outrageous X-rated comedies. Beginning with *Multiple Maniacs* (1970), which featured Divine as the murderous leader of a circus of sexual deviants, Waters's films offered bizarre characters and perverse plots to compensate for their lack of production values. His most notorious film, *Pink Flamingos* (1972), played for years as one of the original "midnight movies," attracting audiences of college students and countercultural cinephiles who had become disenchanted with the idealism of the 1960s. A taboo-shattering film, *Pink Flamingos* features acts of murder, cannibalism, bestiality, and incest, but the most memorable scene occurs at the very end when Divine proves she is "the filthiest person alive" by



Actor/director John Waters attends a press conference to promote the movie *This Filthy World* during the 57th Berlin International Film Festival on February 13, 2007 in Berlin. (Getty Images)

eating dog feces. Along with *Female Trouble* (1974) and *Desperate Living* (1977), *Pink Flamingos* comprised a trash trilogy that made Waters a cult star.

By the 1980s, Waters's films began to take an increasingly mainstream turn, substituting more palatable gimmicks for the irreverent offenses of his earlier work. Waters filmed *Polyester* (1981) in "Odorama," distributing scratch-and-sniff cards to ticket buyers so they could follow cues to smell what they saw on-screen. He also persuaded 1950s screen idol Tab Hunter to play opposite Divine, and, for the first time, received an R-rating. This new, tamer Waters prompted some of his former fans to accuse him of selling out. To that accusation Waters routinely quipped, "I've always wanted to sell out . . . I just couldn't find a buyer." That changed with his next film, *Hairspray* (1988). Set in 1962, *Hairspray* explores segregation in Baltimore through the lens of a television show that features teenage dancers trying out new moves to popular songs of the day. The only John Waters film to receive a PG-rating, *Hairspray* introduced Ricki Lake to America, but was also Waters's last film with Divine, who died shortly after its release. *Hairspray* was eventually adapted to become a Tony Award-winning Broadway musical, inspiring a 2007 film remake that featured a cross-dressing John Travolta in the role originally created for Divine.

The success of *Hairspray* gave Waters access to bigger budgets and stars, but not always bigger audiences for his subsequent films. *Cry Baby* (1990), a nostalgic look at class divisions in the 1950s starring Johnny Depp, was also made into a Broadway musical, but never achieved the success of *Hairspray*. Likewise, *Serial Mom* (1994), with Kathleen Turner playing a homicidal housewife, proved sharp satire but lacked

the subversive edge of Waters's low-budget Dreamland days. Other efforts, including *Pecker* (1998), *Cecil B. Demented* (2000), and *A Dirty Shame* (2004), struggled at the box office. Ironically, Waters's brand of taboo-breaking humor has become so mainstream that it has made it more difficult for him to get laughs.

Irrespective of his filmmaking, Waters continues to have an impact on American popular culture. Sporting his trademark pencil-thin mustache, he makes frequent cameo appearances on television and in movies, inspiring young eccentrics to believe that a highly idiosyncratic vision can eventually find a place in the mainstream.

Selected Filmography

A Dirty Shame (2004); *Hairspray* (1988); *Polyester* (1981); *Desperate Living* (1977); *Pink Flamingos* (1972); *Multiple Maniacs* (1970); *Mondo Trasho* (1969); *Eat Your Makeup* (1968); *Roman Candles* (1966); *Hag in a Black Leather Jacket* (1964)

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—Joseph Christopher Schaub

WAYNE, JOHN. John Wayne was an American film star, director, producer, and cultural icon. Commonly referred to as “the Duke,” Wayne appeared largely in westerns and war films, where his characters and physical demeanor portrayed the sort of rugged frontier individualism that has, for over a century, been an integral part of American cultural identity. While Wayne's roles typically perpetuated the values, ideals, and stalwart image associated with classic western heroes, his characters were often flawed in ways that complicated traditional understandings of those roles. Hard-drinking, short-tempered, prone to brawling, and often inarticulate, Wayne's characters served as powerful symbols of American masculinity, both during World War II and in the postwar period.

Born Marion Robert Morrison on May 26, 1907, in Winterset, Iowa, Wayne and his family relocated to California after his high school graduation. Funded by an athletic scholarship, he attended the University of Southern California, where he was a prelaw, undergraduate student. Interestingly, Wayne's football coach, Howard Jones, introduced him to film studio work, in the form of a summer job provided by western actor Tom Mix in exchange for football tickets. From his initial job in the prop department at William Fox Studios, Wayne gradually moved to playing bit parts as a fill-in and stunt actor, including a role as an extra in *The Great K & A Train Robbery* (1926), which starred Mix.



John Wayne became the quintessential screen cowboy and patriotic American in the more than 200 films he made during his long career. He was one of the biggest box office draws of the twentieth century, appealing to Americans who respected his conservative values, which often clashed with those of his film industry colleagues. (AP/Wide World Photos)

The young Wayne was a promising student, articulate and well-read, but was forced to leave the university when he was dropped from the football team and lost his scholarship. He returned to Fox Studios, where he met and was befriended by director John Ford. Through Ford, and later, actor George O'Brien, Wayne continued to receive small roles, including cast credit for the films *Words and Music* (1929), *Rough Rider* (1930), and *Cheer Up and Smile* (1930). That same year, Wayne was recruited by director Raoul Walsh for his first starring role, in *The Big Trail* (1930). The director, seeking to create a character that conveyed an authentic pioneer spirit, was the first to recognize the image that would carry Wayne to stardom. It was also Walsh who insisted on a name change, and Marion "Duke" Morrison became John Wayne.

The Big Trail, Fox Studios' epic foray into the new 70mm wide-screen process known as "Grandeur," was a box-office flop. Fox went bankrupt; the stu-

dio went into receivership; the volatile John Ford, angered that Wayne had aligned his career with Walsh, shunned the young actor for years; and Wayne, after two more pictures with Fox, was cast adrift. The actor spent the 1930s appearing in 39 B-westerns for a variety of studios, including Columbia, Warner Bros., and Monogram/Lone Star. It was his relationship with the infamous Harry Cohn of Columbia Studios that launched the actor's descent into the Bs. While Cohn had been eager to acquire Wayne, the young actor quickly ran afoul of Cohn's renowned bad temper, and after minor roles in two pictures in 1931 (*Arizona* and *The Deceiver*), Wayne was demoted to the studio's B division. Over the next year, he made four more films for Cohn and Columbia, until his contract was terminated in 1932. Cohn attempted to blacklist Wayne, declaring him a drunkard and a rebel, which led to a year of unemployment for the discouraged actor.

That hungry stretch ended, however, with a role in *Lady and Gent* (1932), for Warner Bros. Studios, one of Hollywood's leading studios, which led to a six-picture contract. The first film in this Warner Bros. series, *Ride Him Cowboy* (1932), also introduced his horse, Duke. Wayne and Duke shifted to Monogram Studios in 1933, starring in the film *Riders of Destiny*. It was here that Wayne would begin honing his craft, under the tutelage of seasoned actors such as Yakima Canutt and Paul Fix. These early Monogram films, produced by Lone Star Productions, also marked the appearance of Wayne's cowboy crooner persona, Singin' Sandy Saunders, developed by Lone Star in response to the immense popularity of another singing cowboy star, Gene Autry. Unable to carry a tune, Wayne lip-synched the songs in all of his Singin' Sandy pictures; the vocals were provided by Smith Ballew, who would soon be a western star in his own right. When Monogram/Lone Star joined Mascot and Consolidated Film Laboratories to form Republic Pictures, Wayne continued to make B-westerns as a Republic property. Wary of being pigeonholed in the Bs, Wayne refused to be cast in singing roles after the 1935 Republic film *Westward Ho*. He finally broke out of the B-western mold in 1936 with a move to Universal, where his six-picture contract included roles as a Coast Guard commander, lumberjack, trucking magnate, newsreel cameraman, hockey star, and pearl diver. While he would return to westerns later in the 1930s, Wayne had begun to establish himself as an actor capable of expanding into other genres.

The mid-1930s marked the point of another change that would forever alter the actor's career—his reunion with John Ford, who reentered Wayne's life as unexpectedly as he had left it. Ford provided Wayne with the role that made him a star, the Ringo Kid in *Stagecoach* (1939). Between the end of World War II and Ford's death in 1972, the two made a total of 12 films together, many of which number among Wayne's most memorable: *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* (1949); *The Quiet Man* (1952) (which earned Ford an Academy Award for Best Director); *The Searchers* (1956); *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962); and *Donovan's Reef* (1963). It was by way of these films that Wayne became the quintessential American hero—the personification of the nation's idealized history—championing traditional mainstream values of patriotism and honor, while challenging the growing ills of postwar America—racism, greed, complacency, and injustice.

Wayne was well on his way to establishing himself as a superstar in Hollywood when the United States entered World War II at the end of 1941, after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Unlike other actors of his era, such as Jimmy Stewart, Clark Gable and Henry Fonda, Wayne chose not to enlist in the armed forces, reluctant to relinquish his hard-won fame and fearing that he would be too old to make a comeback in movies after the completion of his service. He was actually exempt from the draft, due to his age (34) and because he was the father of three children, which qualified him for a family deferment. Although he claimed that he would nevertheless enlist, Wayne repeatedly postponed joining the armed forces for the sake of making just "one more picture." Having already lost a number of their leading men to the war effort, including Gene Autry, Republic Studios was also sharply opposed to Wayne's enlistment. In the end, Wayne's decision elicited sharp criticism from the public, and

also from the man who had become his close friend, John Ford, who had been quick to enlist in the Navy and saw Wayne's choice as self-serving and unpatriotic. Wayne, sensitive to both this criticism and to the weight of social responsibility carried by his screen persona, began to merge his politics and his career, a move that would further distance him from Ford, as the two found themselves on opposing sides of Cold War issues, with Wayne adopting an aggressive anticommunist stance and Ford battling what he saw as industry witch hunts.

Wayne's staunch Republican and anticommunist postwar views became apparent in his film projects as well as in his political activities in the Hollywood community. In 1948, he became president of the Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals (MPA), an organization of politically conservative members of the film community who sought to uncover subversive elements within the industry. MPA members, such as Gary Cooper, Clark Gable, Adolph Menjou, and Wayne's longtime friend Ward Bond, worked in cooperation with the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), an investigative arm of the House of Representatives. Wayne's conservative sentiments led to his 1951 appearance in *Big Jim McLain*, which expressed a favorable opinion of HUAC and its pursuit of American communists. In 1968, after critics suggested his career was at an end, Wayne co-directed and starred in *The Green Berets*, one of the few films of the period to support openly the Vietnam War. Critics deemed the film too political and lacking sensitivity in light of the war's high casualty rate; but Wayne was intent on displaying his support for the war and making a statement about American ideals.

Wayne's final film was the 1976 *The Shootist*. Directed by Don Siegel (*Dirty Harry*, 1971), the film told the story of the last stand of an aging gunfighter dying of cancer, an ironic narrative twist as it turned out, as Wayne's own health was failing at the time he made the picture. Although the film received critical acclaim from *Variety* and the *Hollywood Reporter*, it lagged at the box office and failed to be the comeback vehicle Wayne hoped it would be.

By the end of his career, John Wayne had appeared in more than 250 films, starring in 142 of them and dying in only four. Wayne, perhaps more than any other actor, tapped into the folklore of the American West and the imagery of a new frontier. His characters championed good over evil, overcame adversity at great odds, and gallantly opposed all foes. Among his western classics, in addition to his films with John Ford, are Howard Hawks's *Red River* (1948), *Rio Bravo* (1959), *El Dorado* (1966), and *Rio Lobo* (1970); and Henry Hathaway's *North to Alaska* (1960), *The Sons of Katie Elder* (1965), and *True Grit* (1969), for which Wayne won the Academy Award for Best Actor in a Leading Role.

During his lifetime, Wayne was the recipient of numerous other honors, as well: a Golden Globe Award for *True Grit*; four People's Choice Awards for most popular motion picture actor from 1975–1978; and four Western Heritage Awards, for *The Alamo*, *The Comancheros*, *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, and *True Grit*. He was inducted into the Hall of Great Western Performers of the National Cowboy Museum in 1974, and was also awarded a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, at 1541 Vine Street. Outside the motion picture industry, Wayne's spoken-word album, *America*,

Why I Love Her (1973), was a best seller in both the year of its release and in 2001, when it was rereleased after the terrorist attacks of September 11. The album was also a Grammy nominee in 1973.

Wayne died of lung and stomach cancer on June 11, 1979. He was posthumously awarded the Congressional Gold Medal that year, at the behest of Senator Barry Goldwater, with the inscription "John Wayne, American." The following year, in 1980, then-president Jimmy Carter awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom, America's highest civilian honor. The actor continued to garner posthumous awards and recognition over the next three decades. Ranked fifth in *Entertainment Weekly's* "Greatest Movie Stars of All Time" list and fourth in *Premiere* magazine's list of the same name, Wayne has also consistently appeared in the top 10 of the Harris Poll's listings of America's favorite movie stars since the poll's inception in 1963—including garnering a top-10 spot in 2003, nearly a quarter of a century after his death. The American Film Institute ranked him 13th in its list of the "50 Greatest Screen Legends," and he was also ranked 16th in *Empire* magazine's (United Kingdom) October 1997 "Top 100 Movie Stars of All Time" list. Quigley Publications, publisher, since 1932, of the annual Top 10 Money-Making Stars, cited Wayne as North America's Top box-office star, based on his inclusion 25 times between 1949 and 1974. The actor is also pictured on a U.S. Postal Service commemorative stamp, issued in March 1990. The stamp, one of a series designed to honor classic Hollywood films released in 1939, depicts Wayne in his role as the Ringo Kid, in *Stagecoach*. The John Wayne Museum, located in Wayne's birth town of Winterset, houses memorabilia and resources on the actor's career, and hosts an annual celebration on the anniversary of the actor's birth that is consistently attended by thousands.

Selected Filmography

The Shootist (1976); *Rooster Cogburn* (1975); *Brannigan* (1975); *McQ* (1974); *Cahill U.S. Marshal* (1973); *The Train Robbers* (1973); *The Cowboys* (1972); *Big Jake* (1971); *Rio Lobo* (1970); *Chisum* (1970); *The Undefeated* (1969); *True Grit* (1969); *The Green Berets* (1968); *The War Wagon* (1967); *El Dorado* (1966); *The Sons of Katie Elder* (1965); *In Harm's Way* (1965); *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (1965); *Circus World* (1964); *McLintock!* (1963); *Donovan's Reef* (1963); *How the West Was Won* (1962); *The Longest Day* (1962); *Hatari!* (1962); *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962); *The Comancheros* (1961); *North to Alaska* (1960); *The Alamo* (1960); *The Horse Soldiers* (1959); *Rio Bravo* (1959); *The Barbarian and the Geisha* (1958); *Jet Pilot* (1957); *The Wings of Eagles* (1957); *The Searchers* (1956); *The Conqueror* (1956); *Blood Alley* (1955); *The Sea Chase* (1955); *The High and the Mighty* (1954); *Hondo* (1953); *Big Jim McLain* (1952); *The Quiet Man* (1952); *Flying Leathernecks* (1951); *Operation Pacific* (1951); *Rio Grande* (1950); *Sands of Iwo Jima* (1949); *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* (1949); *3 Godfathers* (1948); *Red River* (1948); *Fort Apache* (1948); *Angel and the Badman* (1947); *They Were Expendable* (1945); *Back to Bataan* (1945); *The Fighting Seabees* (1944); *Reunion in France* (1942); *Pittsburgh* (1942); *Flying Tigers* (1942); *Reap the Wild Wind* (1942); *Seven Sinners* (1940); *The Long Voyage Home* (1940); *Dark Command* (1940); *Allegheny Uprising* (1939); *The Big Trail* (1930)

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—Cynthia J. Miller

WEBER, LOIS. Lois Weber was the first American woman to direct a full-length feature film, *The Merchant of Venice* (1914). She made significant contributions to the nascent medium, creating a prolific body of work and earning enormous respect from her male counterparts. Born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, in 1882, Weber moved to New York hoping to start a career in music. Unsuccessful, she became a street-corner evangelist and a stage actor. Her film career began in 1905 at the Gaumont Film Company. After marrying actor Phillip Smalley in 1906, Weber left her public life in film and became a homemaker. Returning to her career shortly thereafter, she and Smalley took over the Rex Film Company from Edwin S. Porter in 1911. It was here that she acquired a thorough knowledge of the filmmaking process.

During most of the 1910s, Weber was under contract with Universal Studios, eventually becoming their highest-paid director. Universal financed a private studio for her and granted her total artistic freedom. She became one of the studio's biggest money-makers with works such as *Where Are My Children?* (1916), a film about abortion that eventually earned \$3 million. Weber ultimately left Universal, establishing her own production company in 1917. She then signed a contract with Famous Players-Lasky, earning \$50,000 per film; but her contract was dropped when her films proved unprofitable. She rejoined Universal in 1923.

Weber's films were known for provocative themes. *The People vs. John Doe* (1916) addressed capital punishment, *Hand That Rocks the Cradle* (1917) celebrated birth control advocate Margaret Sanger, and *Shoes* (1916) exposed dangers resulting from unequal pay for working women. Initially, her willingness to explore deeply contentious themes lured audiences and generated high revenues, despite problems with censorship boards.

Weber saw the cinema as a vehicle for evangelism, believing earnestly that film should function as a form of social uplift. Her cinematic sermons, aimed at middle-class audiences, challenged attitudes about social issues of the day. Her goal was not to provide commercial entertainment, but to encourage her viewers to involve themselves in progressive causes. Thus, she not only tried to improve the public reputation of film as an art, she also used the medium to make audiences more socially aware.

The Blot (1921) is considered Weber's masterpiece. The film focused on a proud but poor family trying to avoid charity. Her films often condemned capitalistic materialism and linked consumerism with sexual exploitation. Another theme Weber examined

regularly in films such as *Hypocrites* (1915) was hypocrisy in business, religion, and politics.

Significantly, Weber created women-centered narratives hoping to spur her female viewers to become engaged in social reform. She believed that women's superior spirituality would allow them to effect significant social change. Her idealized selfless heroines were contrasted with materialistic modern women. Films such as *The Haunted Bride* (1913), *Woman's Burden* (1914), *Idle Wives* (1916), and *Two Wise Wives* (1921) explored the place of women in a male-dominated society.

Weber was not a feminist, refraining from participation in the suffrage movement active at the time. She never advocated alternatives to domesticity; nor did she recommend fighting social inequities through political activity. Instead, she saw her filmic indictments of social problems as moral and not political statements. In the end, however, her pious moralizing increasingly began to be perceived as overly preachy. Her stereotypically gendered characters and the depictions of the lives they led seemed hopelessly out of step with the spirit of the Roaring Twenties. She eventually lost her production company, divorced her husband, survived a nervous breakdown, remarried, and ultimately divorced again.

After a seven-year hiatus, Weber directed her final film, *White Heat* (1934), a work about miscegenation. The film was poorly received. She finally resorted to taking work as a script doctor in order to support herself. Once a pioneering filmmaker, Weber died in Hollywood in relative obscurity on November 13, 1939.

Selected Filmography

White Heat (1934); *The Angel of Broadway* (1927); *Topsy and Eva* (1927); *Sensation Seekers* (1927); *The Marriage Clause* (1926); *A Chapter in Her Life* (1923); *What Do Men Want?* (1921); *The Blot* (1921); *Too Wise Wives* (1921); *What's Worth While?* (1921); *To Please One Woman* (1920); *Life's Mirror* (1920); *Mum's the Word* (1920); *Forbidden* (1919); *Borrowed Clothes* (1918); *For Husbands Only* (1918); *The Doctor and the Woman* (1918); *The Price of a Good Time* (1917); *Hand That Rocks the Cradle* (1917); *Even As You and I* (1917); *The Boyhood He Forgot* (1917); *The Face Downstairs* (1917); *The Gilded Life* (1916); *The Rock of Riches* (1916); *The People vs. John Doe* (1916); *The Celebrated Stielow Case* (1916); *Saving the Family Name* (1916); *Shoes* (1916); *Where Are My Children?* (1916); *Jewel* (1915); *A Cigarette—That's All* (1915); *Scandal* (1915); *Hypocrites* (1915); *It's No Laughing Matter* (1915); *Helping Mother* (1914); *The Merchant of Venice* (1914); *Woman's Burden* (1914); *The Female of the Species* (1914); *The Traitor* (1914); *The Haunted Bride* (1913); *The Rosary* (1913); *Faraway Fields* (1912); *A Japanese Idyll* (1912); *An Old Fashioned Girl* (1912); *The Greater Christian* (1912); *The Troubadour's Triumph* (1912); *The Bargain* (1912); *Fine Feathers* (1912); *Angels Unaware* (1912); *The Heiress* (1911); *A Heroine of '76* (1911)

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—Jamie Capuzza

WELLES, ORSON. George Orson Welles, a dominant directorial personality whose films embodied the auteur theory of modernist cinema, was also a radio entertainer, political activist, magician, and commercial actor. By the time of his death in 1985, he had directed more than 40 film and television projects and acted in over 100, ranging from *Jane Eyre* (1944) to *The Muppet Movie* (1979). Throughout his career, he had difficulty completing and marketing films, in part because of his unorthodox working style and increasingly experimental cinematic technique. Ultimately, he left a multifaceted entertainment legacy by developing a distinct visual style, establishing new guidelines for cinematic adaptations of literature and initiating postmodern explorations of the line



Orson Welles delivers a radio broadcast from a New York studio in 1938. On October 30, 1938, he performed an adaptation of H. G. Wells's *War of the Worlds*. The realistic account of an invasion from Mars caused thousands of listeners to panic, many of whom believed that an actual attack was taking place. (AP/Wide World Photos)

between truth and fiction in mass media. Welles was best known for his first completed feature film, *Citizen Kane* (1941), which tops the American Film Institute's list of greatest American movies of all time; but he was also widely recognized for his infamous 1938 *War of the Worlds* radio broadcast and his resonant voice in commercials.

Orson Welles was born in Kenosha, Wisconsin, on May 6, 1915. The strained marriage between his entrepreneurial father and musically inclined mother resulted in his being raised in part by a family friend, Dr. Maurice Bernstein. Following his mother's death when he was nine, Welles enrolled in the Todd School for Boys, where he met another mentor, Roger Hill, and explored magic and theater, initiating an interest that would mark his whole career—spectacular adaptation of the classics. Hill later collaborated with the teenage Welles on the collection *Everybody's Shakespeare*, a performance guide to Shakespeare. Throughout his career, Welles adapted Shakespeare, including *Othello* (1952), several different stage and screen versions of *Macbeth*, and his composite view of Falstaff, *Chimes at Midnight* (1966). He was working on a version of *King Lear* at the time of his death. Welles's Shakespeare productions in particular reflect his belief that art should “have an educational function and serve a social purpose” (Anderegg, 1999).

Following graduation and his father's death, Welles insinuated his way into performing at Dublin's Gate Theatre, where he met Hilton Edwards and Micheál MacLiammóir. Both would later appear in his film adaptation of *Othello*, winner of the Palme d'Or at Cannes in 1952, and in the documentary *Filming Othello* (1978). Upon his return to the United States he secured work with Katherine Cornell, which brought him to the attention of John Houseman, who cast him in the 1935 stage adaptation of Archibald MacLeish's *Panic*.

From 1936–37, Houseman and Welles worked for the Federal Theatre Project, where they produced a Haitian *Macbeth* with an all-black cast, as well as *Horse Eats Hat* and *The Cradle Will Rock*. Each of these productions directly addressed contemporary politics through an experimental dramatic form. In 1937, Houseman and Welles founded the Mercury Theatre. They launched the Mercury with a front-page manifesto in the *New York Times*, articulating their goal of undertaking new approaches to the adaptation of classic literature for the masses.

In 1938, Welles expanded the Mercury Theatre on radio in the series *First Person Singular: Mercury Theatre on the Air*. Welles and Houseman funded their Mercury projects with income Welles derived from his acting roles on radio in shows such as *The Shadow*. Welles later recalled, “The radio loot gave us an edge” in terms of staging high-quality productions at a rapid rate of speed” (Welles, Bogdanovich, and Rosenbaum, 1998). The Theatre expanded to become Mercury Productions when Welles moved to Hollywood. From 1937 to 1952, Mercury Productions created a body of work across stage, screen, and radio that changed industry concepts of how mass media could make classic literature relevant to audiences. The Mercury produced a fascist *Julius Caesar*, the racially controversial *Native Son*, and an expansive film version of *Othello*. Welles's innovative use of journalistic style in his 1938 radio version of H. G. Wells's *War of the Worlds* created panic among some listeners who believed that Martians were actually invading New Jersey. The intense media scrutiny that followed this broadcast led Campbell's Soup

to sponsor the radio series, which was renamed *Campbell Playhouse*. By the age of 23, Welles had created a unique artistic persona and a trademark brand of narrative that invited publicity and allowed him to move to Hollywood as an actor/director/writer with a record-setting contract in terms of both money and power

Welles's RKO contract stipulated that he write, direct, and act in an original production each year. He immediately violated this RKO mandate before he even began to shoot *Citizen Kane*, as he co-wrote the screenplay for the film with Herman Mankiewicz. The film proved troublesome for RKO before it was ever released, as rumors circulated that Charles Foster Kane, played by Welles, was a thinly veiled portrayal of the powerful publishing magnate William Randolph Hearst. Hearst went so far as to try to suppress the film's release; he failed, and *Kane* went on to be hailed by critics as one of the greatest films ever made.

With its tightly woven narrative structure, innovative cinematography (largely the result of Welles's collaboration with Gregg Toland), and thematic exploration of the human experience, *Citizen Kane* helped establish a new vocabulary for cinema. His use of deep focus, high-contrast lighting, and long takes particularly influenced other filmmakers. The film was not initially an audience favorite, however, performing poorly at the box office. This raised concern among RKO's studio heads, especially because Welles had already spent huge amounts of their money adapting a never-completed version of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* for the screen.

Welles's failure to complete *Heart of Darkness* set the tone for what was to come: the conception and initiation of innovative cinematic projects that were never fully realized. *Heart of Darkness*, for example, stumbled badly, as Welles cast himself in both lead roles and attempted to use the camera to represent the audience's gaze—equating the "I" of the narrator with the viewer's eye. After extensive preparatory scripting, casting, research, and filming, the project was shelved at a cost of over \$160,000. Welles recycled parts of it on radio, but this failure undermined his later RKO projects. Indeed, his adaptation of Booth Tarkington's *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1942) was reedited without his approval while he was filming his never released "Rio Project," *It's All True*, in Brazil. Welles disowned the studio cut of the film, and *Ambersons* was the last of his projects released by RKO.

Welles's subsequent film work reveals a creative working style at odds with the studio film production process in Hollywood. Always a collaborative filmmaker with enthusiasm for the initial phases of a project but impatient with the details of management, marketing, and release, Welles increasingly chose cinematic experimentation over commercial success. He remained politically active during World War II, broadcasting many antifascist and pro-ally wartime radio shows, including *Hello Americans*, which used material from his time in Brazil to encourage Pan-American identity. He maintained a high profile in Hollywood, and married (and divorced) actress Rita Hayworth, with whom he co-starred in *The Lady from Shanghai* (1947). His last project before leaving the United States for Europe was a film adaptation of *Macbeth* (1948), which used some structural features of his Federal Theatre Project adaptation but returned the play to its original Scottish setting. Ultimately, he moved abroad to work on projects such as his ongoing adaptation of *Othello* and the Harry Lime radio

series, which was loosely based on the character he played in *The Third Man* (1949). This series inspired the film *Mr. Arkadin* (1955), which exists in multiple forms, and was variously released and distributed in Spain, Britain, and the United States. Welles's third wife, Paola Mori, played the role of daughter to his Mr. Arkadin in this film.

Welles had a chance to reconcile with Hollywood while making *Touch of Evil* (1958), which has been described as a "daringly expressionistic nightmare vision disguised as a B-movie crime thriller" (McBride, 2006). But on this project, too, Welles found himself at odds with the Hollywood studio establishment. Universal Studios barred him from the lot during postproduction, and he again disavowed the version of the film that the studio released. Returning to Europe, he was embraced as an avant-garde director by filmmakers François Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard. While filming his 1962 adaptation of Franz Kafka's novel *The Trial*, he met Oja Kodar, his artistic and romantic partner for the last portion of his life. From 1967–69, he worked on *The Deep* with Kodar and Jeanne Moreau. Welles returned to Hollywood in 1970, where he met another collaborator, cinematographer Gary Graver, who helped him shift his cinematic style in yet another direction. He now became increasingly interested in exploring the boundaries of documentary form and its potential for self-representation, manipulation, and self-critique. His later films *F for Fake* (1974), *Filming Othello* (1978), and the unfinished *The Other Side of the Wind* reflect this preoccupation.

Welles left a distinctive legacy to the entertainment industry: the development of a cinematic rhetoric that bridged the movements of modernism and postmodernism. He established a visual style that influenced later filmmakers, and his exploration of the line between fact and fiction remains a central theme in contemporary entertainment. Welles's interests in the fact/fiction divide were vividly realized in his 1938 *War of the Worlds* broadcast and reiterated in *It's All True*, *F for Fake*, and *Filming Othello*. He became adept at representing the state of modern consciousness as it devolved toward postmodern disorientation, and his characters often portray the difficulty of constructing any single "truth" when it comes to personal or public history.

Equal parts huckster and literary master, Welles left behind more unfinished directorial projects than completed ones, and he can be seen as an early proponent of independent filmmaking. He ultimately became as famous for playing himself as for producing, directing, or writing material. His resonant voice, which had been so remarkable in his radio broadcasts, became his logo through his famous Gallo wine slogan, "We will sell no wine before its time," making him a cultural touchstone.

Welles received an honorary Academy Award for superlative artistry in 1970. In 1975, the American Film Institute recognized his work with a Lifetime Achievement Award. The year before his death, the Directors Guild also gave him a Lifetime Achievement Award, its highest honor. Welles died at his home in Los Angeles on October 10, 1985. He is buried on a private estate in Ronda, Spain.

Selected Filmography

The Trial (1962); *Touch of Evil* (1958); *Mr. Arkadin* (1955); *Othello* (1952); *Macbeth* (1948); *The Stranger* (1946); *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1942); *Citizen Kane* (1941)

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—Marguerite Rippy

WENDERS, WIM. Wim Wenders ranks among the most influential German filmmakers of the postwar era, having written, directed, or produced more than 30 feature and documentary films, including *Kings of the Road* (1976), *The State of Things* (1982), *Paris, Texas* (1983), and *Wings of Desire* (1987), which won him the Best Director award at the Cannes Film Festival. Generally associated with the New German Cinema movement, Wenders has helped revitalize and internationalize German film production. His stories, and the cinematic techniques he uses to tell them, tend to focus on the individual's search for meaning in postwar urban society.

Wenders was born in Düsseldorf, Germany, on August 14, 1945, and grew up learning little about his nation's recent past or cultural identity. Like most of his generation, Wenders was strongly influenced by the Americanization—via rock and roll, Hollywood, and U.S. occupation forces—of German popular culture. At an early age, Wenders recognized the cinema's capacity to preserve what seemed to be the fleeting moments of rapid-paced industrial society. Although he considered becoming a doctor or a clergyman, in 1967 he enrolled in Munich's new University of Television and Film. As a student, Wenders wrote, directed, filmed, and edited numerous shorts, culminating his studies with the feature-length *Summer in the City* (1970). By the time he graduated, he had come to see film as a medium by which to challenge rather than entertain audiences.

After graduation, Wenders became a vocal member of the New German Cinema movement, which was critical of the German film industry's sentimental *Heimatfilme* (home-land film), with its avoidance of controversial topics. Following New Cinema mentors Alexander Kluge and Volker Schlöndorff, Wenders sought to make pictures that explored the human condition by troping traditional narrative structures in favor of modernist explorations of cultural identity and ambiguity. The young filmmaker was also inspired by American directors such as John Ford, Samuel Fuller, and Nicholas Ray; the latter became Wenders's collaborator and subject in *Lightning over Water* (1980).

Concerned by the growing influence of for-profit studios and distributors, Wenders co-founded a filmmakers' cooperative, the Authors Film Publishing Group, in 1971.



German film director Wim Wenders looks on during an interview with AFP at the EU headquarters in Brussels on October 26, 2010. (AFP/Getty Images)

That same year, he made *The Goalie's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick*, which won the Film Critics' Award at the Venice Film Festival and demonstrated his characteristic slow-moving camera work, long takes, and visual allusions to off-camera space. In 1975, Wenders's *Wrong Move* earned German Film Prizes in Gold for Director, Screenplay, Editor, Director of Photography, Music, and Actors. A year later, *Kings of the Road* won the International Critics' Prize at Cannes, while *The American Friend* won the 1977 German Critics' Prize. Moving to Hollywood in 1978, Wenders directed and produced award-winning English-language features such as *Paris, Texas*, which won a Palme d'Or at Cannes in 1984. Since then, he has increasingly blended feature film and documentary techniques. Examples include *Tokyo Ga*, his 1985 film about Japanese director Yasujiro Ozu, and *Buena Vista Social Club* (1998).

Wenders rarely offers interpretative or theoretical contexts for his work, instead insisting that he aims simply to document the perpetual instability—and thus insecurity—of contemporary life through what he has called “contemplative cinema” (Kolker and Beicken, 1993). While critics have suggested that many of his films indirectly explore Germany's own struggle to come to terms with its postwar identity, Wenders claims that the isolation and uncertainty expressed in his pictures are simply foundational elements of the contemporary human experience.

In addition to writing numerous books about cinema, Wenders continues to direct and produce films, and to assert the importance of independent production companies. From 1991 to 1996, he chaired the European Film Academy, and later served as the Academy's president. Both critics and advocates recognize him for his integrative cinematic styles and sobering yet sympathetic depictions of modern sociological and

political problems. These themes are showcased in his Los Angeles trilogy: *The Million Dollar Hotel* (2000), *The End of Violence* (1997), and *Land of Plenty* (2004); and in his 2008 film *Palermo Shooting*. In recognition of his stylistic contributions to modern cinema, Wenders received the Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Prize in 1991 and a Lifetime Achievement Award at San Francisco's 2009 Berlin and Beyond Film Festival.

Selected Filmography

If Buildings Could Talk (2010); *Palermo Shooting* (2008); *Don't Come Knocking* (2005); *Land of Plenty* (2004); *The Soul of a Man* (2003); *Other Side of the Road* (2003); *Ode to Cologne: A Rock 'N' Roll Film* (2002); *The Million Dollar Hotel* (2000); *Buena Vista Social Club* (1999); *Willie Nelson at the Teatro* (1998); *The End of Violence* (1997); *Lumière and Company* (1995); *A Trick of Light* (1995); *Beyond the Clouds* (1995); *Lisbon Story* (1994); *Faraway, So Close!* (1993); *Wings of Desire* (1987); *Tokyo-Ga* (1985); *Paris, Texas* (1984); *Docu Drama* (1984); *Der Stand der Dinge* (1982); *Reverse Angle* (1982); *Hammitt* (1982); *Lightning Over Water* (1980); *The American Friend* (1977); *Kings of the Road* (1976); *Falsche Bewegung* (1975); *Alice in the Cities* (1974); *The Scarlet Letter* (1973); *The Goalie's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick* (1972); *Summer in the City* (1970); *Silver City* (1969); *Same Player Shoots Again* (1968); *Klappenfilm* (1968); *Victor I.* (1968); *Schauplätze* (1967)

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—Kimberly A. Redding

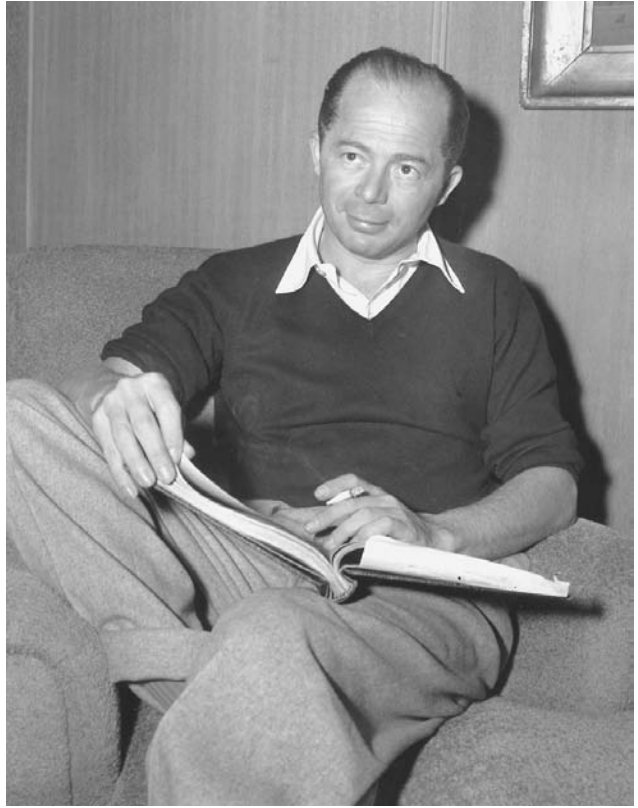
WILDER, BILLY. Samuel Wilder—better known by his nickname “Billy”—was born on June 22, 1906 in Sucha, Galicia, Austria-Hungary (now Poland). He is considered one of the most talented Jewish writers and directors of the many who, in the 1930s, sought refuge from Hitler's Germany in Hollywood. Wilder's career spanned five decades, and during that time, in addition to winning six Academy Awards, he established a reputation for verbal wit and for sharp, often satiric, observation of American manners and mores.

Wilder's career began in Germany with a collaborative script for the movie *Menschen am Sonntag/People on Sunday* (1929), on which he worked with fellow filmmakers Robert Siodmak and Fred Zinnemann. This slice-of-life, pseudo-documentary glimpse of middle-class couples on an ordinary summer's day was followed by a dozen additional scripts before Wilder fled to Paris, where he co-wrote and directed *Mauvaise graine* (1933), starring the celebrated French actress Danielle Darrieux. From France, Wilder made his way to the United States, and though knowing little English, he

was able to find work in Hollywood as a story writer, and soon after a successful screenwriter. Wilder was especially fortunate, from the beginning, in his choice of literary collaborators, two of whom worked with him on many of his most successful films: Charles Brackett (from 1938 until 1950) and I. A. L. ("Izzy") Diamond, who both co-wrote Wilder's scripts and worked as his producer from 1959 until the 1980s.

Wilder was equally fortunate, however, in his choice of a directorial mentor, Ernst Lubitsch, a fellow expatriate and an accomplished director of light comedies. Of the several screenplays that Wilder wrote for Lubitsch, undoubtedly the most successful was *Ninotchka* (1939), which featured the international queen of cinema Greta Garbo, in her first comedic role. Playing against type, Garbo appears at the beginning of this satiric romantic comedy as a Soviet agent on her first trip to Paris, incapable of any emotion except contempt for the capitalist West, only to find herself falling in love, almost against her will, with a decadent playboy, Count Leon d'Algout (Melvyn Douglas). Wilder's script dwells humorously on the contrast between emotion and ideology, celebrating the power of the former and the hollowness of the latter.

Like his contemporaries John Huston and Preston Sturges, Wilder leaped at the chance to make the transition from screenwriting to directing, and after directing two rather unexceptional films—a comedy, *The Major and the Minor* (1942), and a wartime drama, *Five Graves to Cairo* (1943)—Wilder broke new ground with what is now regarded as a film noir masterpiece, *Double Indemnity* (1944). Based on James M. Cain's enormously popular crime novel of the same name, *Double Indemnity* repeatedly challenged the Production Code, depicting a pair of adulterous lovers—played brilliantly by Fred MacMurray and Barbara Stanwyck—who execute a murder before finally turning on each other. To create a script worthy of such literary material,



The enfant terrible of the American cinema, Billy Wilder was one of the most successful writer/directors in Hollywood, applying European sophistication to "naive" American subjects. Few films display the wit and cynicism of Wilder's best, which include *Sunset Boulevard* and *Some Like It Hot*. (AP/Wide World Photos)

Wilder turned to mystery-novelist Raymond Chandler, after Charles Brackett refused to have anything to do with characters as sordid and violent as Cain's, and the result was a new type of dialogue—snappy and cynical—and a voice-over narration that conveyed equal amounts of introspective irony and disenchantment as the criminal protagonist foresees his own tragic fate, perfectly capturing the darkness and world-weariness of the era.

Wilder carried much the same tone over into his next three major films, *Lost Weekend* (1945), *Sunset Boulevard* (1950), and *Ace in the Hole* (1951). Of these three, *Lost Weekend* is perhaps the least despairing. Its protagonist, Don Birnam (played by Ray Milland, a role for which he won the Academy Award), is an aspiring writer and seemingly hopeless alcoholic, whose descent into addiction is traced in a series of increasingly surreal sequences. In spite of its downbeat subject, and studio jitters over its release, the film was surprisingly popular with audiences—if only because it holds out the prospect of recovery at its conclusion—and earned Wilder Best Director and Best Screenplay Academy Awards. *Sunset Blvd.*, for which Wilder earned (once again) an Oscar for Best Screenplay, offers no reassuring possibility of moral redemption for its antihero, Joe Gillis (William Holden), who is seen lying dead in a swimming pool at the beginning of the film, and whose life unfolds in a continuous series of flashbacks. Like Don Birnam, Gillis is an aspiring writer, but one who allows himself to be drawn into a romantic relationship with a faded movie queen, played in full diva mode by silent film star Gloria Swanson. Swanson's Norma Desmond was sufficiently close to reality to pique its audience's curiosity as to where fiction began and real life left off, and while the movie may not have entirely succeeded as Swanson's "return" to Hollywood after many years of retirement, it certainly remains one of the most indelible screen portraits of an artistic personality driven mad by the destructive power of fame. *Sunset Blvd.* is unquestionably Wilder's harshest critique of the Hollywood subculture, from which he frequently tried to detach himself.

In contrast to *Sunset Blvd.*, *Ace in the Hole* never quite found its audience in the 1950s, and though its portrait of media exploitation and amoral journalists is better received today, its cynicism was seen by contemporary audiences as over the top—and only partly as the result of Kirk Douglas's scenery-chewing performance. Wilder's next major film, *Stalag 17* (1953), enjoyed a very different fate, winning William Holden an Academy Award for Best Actor. As an adaptation of a successful theatrical play, *Stalag 17* succeeds at several levels, combining comic realism with suspense in its depiction of a prisoner-of-war camp and a host of colorful and largely unheroic characters. Four years later, Wilder turned to yet another theatrical play for inspiration, Agatha Christie's *Witness for the Prosecution* (1957), which features two extraordinary performances by Tyrone Power and Marlene Dietrich, and a plot twist that even Christie admired.

Wilder's films of the middle to late 1950s consist mostly of romantic comedies, often tinged with mild social satire, and among them *Sabrina* (1954) and *The Seven Year Itch* (1955) proved to be the most successful. By this time, Wilder had left Paramount and parted company with longtime collaborator Charles Brackett, and with his new writing partner, I. A. L. Diamond, he created two of the most brilliant comic films of his career: *Some Like It Hot* (1959) and *The Apartment* (1960). *Some Like It*

Hot is often described as a screwball comedy, combining slapstick with a slightly absurd, fast-paced narrative, but its relentless parody of 1930s-style gangster movies is only one source of laughter that Wilder cleverly exploits; his witty exploration of male-female identity issues (via a series of cross-dressing episodes) attracts even more attention today. When Joe E. Brown, a many-times-divorced millionaire who is about to marry a woman he knows only as “Daphne” (played hilariously by Jack Lemmon), utters the last line of the film—“Nobody’s perfect”—having just discovered that his intended bride is really a groom, Wilder’s film rises far above the level of inane humor one associates with this genre and enters the realm of sublime comic humanism, where all contradictions are reconciled through laughter.

The Apartment ventures into somewhat more serious territory, while retaining a fundamentally comic view of love and romance. Building on sociological critiques of the 1950s that depicted corporate life in the United States as conformist and soulless, Wilder offers us a portrait of the business world as a place of sexual as well as moral exploitation. By placing two slightly pathetic but lovable losers at the center of his film (Shirley MacLaine as Fran the elevator girl and Jack Lemmon as C. C. “Bud” Baxter, a very junior executive on the make), Wilder offers his audience a pair of characters with whom to empathize, and through whom the conflicts between ambition and integrity—or more pointedly between bosses and workers—can be resolved and redeemed by true love. Once again, Wilder’s perspective is that of the social outsider, viewing the manners and mores of his adopted society with a mixture of sympathy and scorn.

The Apartment, though it garnered yet another set of Academy Awards for Wilder (Best Director, Picture, and Screenplay), represents a turning point in Wilder’s career. None of the films that followed achieved anything like the critical esteem or popular success that had followed him up to this point, and he found it increasingly difficult to connect with audiences whose taste in movies had evidently changed. *Irma la Douce* (1963) and *The Fortune Cookie* (1966) reunited Wilder with Jack Lemmon in films whose combination of farce and satire remains uneven, and the forced humor of flops like *Kiss Me, Stupid* (1964) and *Buddy, Buddy* (1981) signaled to many in Hollywood that Wilder’s days as an active and creative writer/director had definitely passed. Yet, in spite of the evident decline of creative energy and inspiration in his last films, Wilder’s reputation as a comic auteur and as a superb “actor’s director” grew in the last decades of the twentieth century, and today his films routinely appear in “top 100 film” lists throughout the world. Wilder died in Los Angeles on March 22, 2002.

Selected Filmography

Buddy, Buddy (1981); *Fedora* (1978); *The Front Page* (1974); *Avanti!* (1972); *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes* (1970); *The Fortune Cookie* (1966); *Kiss Me, Stupid* (1964); *Irma la Douce* (1963); *One, Two, Three* (1961); *The Apartment* (1960); *Some Like It Hot* (1959); *Witness for the Prosecution* (1957); *Love in the Afternoon* (1957); *The Spirit of St. Louis* (1957); *The Seven Year Itch* (1955); *Sabrina* (1954); *Stalag 17* (1953); *The Big Carnival* (1951); *Sunset Blvd.* (1950); *A Foreign Affair* (1948); *The Emperor Waltz* (1948); *The Lost Weekend* (1945); *Double Indemnity* (1944); *Five Graves to Cairo* (1943); *The Major and the Minor* (1942)

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—Robert Platzner

WILLIAMS, JOHN. John Williams, one of the premier composers of film music, has written soundtracks for over 100 motion pictures. As Williams himself has made clear, successful composers for films attempt to write music that will evoke emotions from audiences while not overwhelming the movie-viewing experience. Williams has certainly accomplished this, as he has produced some of the most powerful and popular musical themes in the history of cinema.

Born John Towner Williams on February 8, 1932, in Long Island, New York, the composer began to play the piano at age eight. When the family moved to Los Angeles in 1948, Williams studied with pianist-arranger Bobby Van Epps. During his service in the U.S. Air Force (1951–54), he conducted ensembles and arranged music for a variety



Composer and conductor John Williams leads the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra during the grand opening celebration at the *Wizarding World of Harry Potter* at Universal Orlando Resort theme park in Orlando, Florida, June 16, 2010. Williams composed many film scores, including those for *Star Wars*, *Superman*, *Home Alone*, the first three *Harry Potter* movies, and Steven Spielberg's feature films such as those in the *Indiana Jones* series, *Schindler's List*, *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial*, *Jurassic Park*, and *Jaws*. (AP/Wide World Photos)

of performing groups. He returned to New York, studied at Juilliard, and played in various jazz clubs. He later moved to Los Angeles and enrolled at UCLA, where he studied composition with Arthur Olaf Andersen and Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco.

In 1956, he became a studio pianist, working with film composers Alfred Newman, Franz Waxman, Bernard Herrmann, and Henry Mancini. During the mid-1960s, he arranged and conducted music for Columbia Records. He scored the music for comedies such as *John Goldfarb, Please Come Home* (1964) and *How to Steal a Million* (1966); he also had subordinate compositional roles in films such as *Goodbye, Mr. Chips* (1969) and *Fiddler on the Roof* (1971).

During the 1970s, he composed some of his most memorable themes; these were often played at crucial moments during iconic films in order to signify both the literal and figurative presence of a particular character or to evoke emotion from audiences. One of his earliest efforts was for *Cowboys* (1972), a coming-of-age western starring John Wayne that celebrated the myths of the American male and of America's "manifest destiny." Two of his most stirring and provocative early themes were those for *Jaws* (1975) and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977), which, respectively, reminded audiences that aliens from either the sea or the sky were always lurking close at hand.

It may be argued that Williams's music that has had the greatest impact on moviegoers is that which he produced for the double trilogy *Star Wars* (1977–2005). In composing the different thematic musical elements for these pictures, Williams was seeking to define a "strong melodic identification" between the filmic characters and audiences (Byrd, 1997). With this in mind, he manipulated the music to reflect the mood. For the heroic Jedi characters, for example, he composed themes befitting their idealized status, the music soaring upwards. For conflict or for characters that had gone over to the "dark side," such as Darth Vader, he used minor modes, slower tempos, with combined brass and percussion to suggest foreboding, military moods. For the fourth film—the first episode of the second trilogy—*The Phantom Menace* (1999), Williams was forced to coordinate his music with 2,000 special effects, a rate of about 17 per minute. Even here, though, he demonstrated his artistic genius, cleverly inserting snippets of themes that were well known to viewers who had watched the "earlier" episodes in the series (the films of the "second" trilogy, while made long after the films of the first trilogy, actually cover narrative material that predates the narrative materials that are covered in the films of the first trilogy—thus, the films of the second trilogy are actually "prequels" to the films of the first trilogy).

Significantly, Williams has been equally comfortable in scoring music for film genres as divergent as science fiction (*Jurassic Park*, 1993), comedy (*Home Alone*, 1990), and history (*Schindler's List*, 1993). A romantic traditionalist in style, he does not rely on electronic or synthesized sounds for machines, but emphasizes their "human" characteristics; in this way he may be considered a composer in the mold of earlier cinematic composers like Elmer Bernstein and Henry Mancini. Williams conducted his film music, Olympic fanfares, and the compositions of many other composers as musical director of the Boston Pops Orchestra between 1980 and 1993. In an interview with composer Irwin Bazelon, he noted that the best filmmakers are inherently musical; producing a film, after all, suggested Williams, is, in essence, a musical act (Bazelon, 1975).

Selected Filmography

Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull (2008); *Munich* (2005); *Memoirs of a Geisha* (2005); *War of the Worlds* (2005); *Star Wars: Episode III—Revenge of the Sith* (2005); *The Terminal* (2004); *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (2004); *Catch Me If You Can* (2002); *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (2002); *Minority Report* (2002); *Star Wars: Episode II—Attack of the Clones* (2002); *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (2001); *Artificial Intelligence: AI* (2001); *The Patriot* (2000); *Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace* (1999); *Stepmom* (1998); *Saving Private Ryan* (1998); *Seven Years in Tibet* (1997); *The Lost World: Jurassic Park* (1997); *Sleepers* (1996); *Nixon* (1995); *Sabrina* (1995); *Schindler's List* (1993); *Jurassic Park* (1993); *Home Alone 2: Lost in New York* (1992); *Far and Away* (1992); *JFK* (1991); *Hook* (1991); *Home Alone* (1990); *Presumed Innocent* (1990); *Always* (1989); *Born on the Fourth of July* (1989); *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989); *The Accidental Tourist* (1988); *Empire of the Sun* (1987); *The Witches of Eastwick* (1987); *Space Camp* (1986); *The River* (1984); *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984); *Star Wars: Episode VI—Return of the Jedi* (1983); *Monsignor* (1982); *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial* (1982); *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981); *Star Wars: Episode V—The Empire Strikes Back* (1980); *1941* (1979); *Dracula* (1979); *Superman* (1978); *Jaws 2* (1978); *The Fury* (1978); *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977); *Star Wars: Episode IV—A New Hope* (1977); *Black Sunday* (1977); *Midway* (1976); *The Missouri Breaks* (1976); *Family Plot* (1976); *Jaws* (1975); *The Eiger Sanction* (1975); *The Towering Inferno* (1974); *Earthquake* (1974); *The Sugarland Express* (1974); *Cinderella Liberty* (1973); *The Paper Chase* (1973); *The Man Who Loved Cat Dancing* (1973); *The Long Goodbye* (1973); *The Poseidon Adventure* (1972); *The Cowboys* (1972); *Fiddler on the Roof* (1971)

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—Ralph Hartsock

WYLER, WILLIAM. Director William Wyler was born on July 1, 1902, in Mülhausen, a province of Alsace, which was then part of Germany. He immigrated to the United States in the 1920s after his mother took him there to meet her cousin, Carl Laemmle, the head of Universal Studios. Nominated for 12 Academy Awards for direction, he won 3 Oscars in the category, second only to John Ford's 4 awards. His films have won more Academy Awards for performances, sets, and music than any other director in history.

As a young boy, after watching Feuillade's *Fantomas* (1914) series, Wyler became fascinated with film. When he arrived at Universal in the 1920s, he started at the

bottom, running errands, acting as an assistant prop man, and working on every aspect of film production. The director's bug caught him, and he eventually worked his way up to the position of assistant director. He worked on such notable productions as Lon Chaney's *Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1923) and the silent film version of *Ben-Hur* (1925); he also began directing two-reel westerns, such as *Crook Buster* (1925), at this time. His first major feature was a semi-talkie, *The Love Trap* (1929). *Counselor at Law* (1933), which explored the then-taboo subject of anti-Semitism, is generally regarded as his first serious film.

In 1935, Wyler formed one of the most successful producer/director partnerships in film history when he joined with Samuel Goldwyn. His work with Goldwyn made Wyler one of the most respected and sought-after directors in Hollywood. Their first feature, *These Three* (1935), was based on Lillian Hellman's Broadway hit, *The Children's Hour*. Some criticized Goldwyn and Wyler for making the film, as the play had been attacked for containing lesbian themes, even though Hellman denied this, maintaining that her work was about the destructive power of a lie. The production went forward, however, and Wyler would develop another important filmic relationship while working on the picture, that with the brilliant cinematographer, Gregg Toland, with whom Orson Welles would work on *Citizen Kane*.

Wyler's next picture was *Dodsworth* (1936), adapted from a Sinclair Lewis novel of the same name. This was his first film to receive Academy Award nominations. Wyler then made the 1937 gangster picture *Dead End*, with Humphrey Bogart. Set in the slums of New York, it was the first film to feature the Bowery Boys/Dead End Kids/East Side Kids. In 1938, Wyler was loaned out to Warner Bros. to make the Southern drama *Jezebel*, which featured Bette Davis. In 1939, he talked Goldwyn into making what turned out to be one of the best film versions of Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*; and in 1941, he worked on another Southern drama, *Little Foxes*, again with Bette Davis. In 1942, Wyler made *Mrs. Miniver*, considered by many to be one of his best films. *Mrs. Miniver*, which tells the story of the experiences of a British family during World War II, was one of the first mainstream Hollywood films to explore the menace of Nazism. The film received 12 Oscar nominations, taking home 6 awards, including the statue for Best Director for Wyler.

Interestingly, the same year that he made *Mrs. Miniver*, Wyler was commissioned as a major in the United States Air Force. While stationed in England he produced documentaries, putting himself in harm's way in order to gather air combat footage; indeed, on a mission over Italy, he sustained injuries that left him partially deaf. After his return to the United States, Wyler made two wartime documentaries, *The Memphis Belle* (1944) and *Thunderbolt* (1947).

In 1946, Wyler directed what most consider his cinematic masterpiece, *The Best Years of Our Lives*. Shot in deep focus by cinematographer Toland, the film follows the lives of three veterans who return to their hometown and try to adjust to everyday life. Featuring notable performances by Myrna Loy, Fredric March, and Dana Andrews, *The Best Years of Our Lives* also starred Harold Russell, a nonprofessional actor who had lost both hands when an explosive device detonated while he was making a training film for the Army. Given hooks to replace his hands, Russell received an

Academy Award for his portrayal of a disabled World War II veteran. In addition to Russell's award, the film won six other Oscars.

Feeling increasingly constrained working under Goldwyn, Wyler struck out on his own in the late 1940s. His first production as an independent filmmaker was *The Heiress* (1949), featuring Olivia de Havilland and Montgomery Clift. Throughout the 1950s, Wyler made other notable pictures, including *Carrie* (1952), *Desperate Hours* (1955), *Friendly Persuasion* (1956), and *The Big Country* (1958). He also directed Audrey Hepburn in her breakthrough role in *Roman Holiday* in 1953; and in 1959, he made the big-budget epic *Ben-Hur*, with Charlton Heston in the lead role. The highly successful film brought MGM studios back from bankruptcy and garnered Wyler his third Best Director Oscar.

During the 1960s, Wyler made the *Children's Hour* (1961), *The Collector* (1965), *How to Steal a Million* (1966), and the film that propelled Barbra Streisand to stardom, *Funny Girl* (1968). His last film was the racially charged *The Liberation of L. B. Jones*, which was released in 1970.

Perhaps Wyler's greatest gift was as a cinematic storyteller. Working across genres, he gained a reputation as a demanding director, but one who always maintained a sense of dignity and respect on his sets. Known for the emotional quality that he brought to his films, Wyler's pictures continue to be extremely popular with audiences.

Heralded as one the greatest directors in film history—and one of the most highly honored—Wyler died in Beverly Hills, California, on July 27, 1981.

Selected Filmography

The Liberation of L. B. Jones (1970); *Funny Girl* (1968); *How to Steal a Million* (1966); *The Collector* (1965); *The Children's Hour* (1961); *Ben-Hur* (1959); *The Big Country* (1958); *Friendly Persuasion* (1956); *The Desperate Hours* (1955); *Roman Holiday* (1953); *Carrie* (1952); *Detective Story* (1951); *The Heiress* (1949); *Thunderbolt* (1947); *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946); *The Memphis Belle: A Story of a Flying Fortress* (1944); *The Little Foxes* (1941); *The Letter* (1940); *The Westerner* (1940); *Wuthering Heights* (1939); *Jezebel* (1938); *Dead End* (1937); *Dodsworth* (1936); *These Three* (1936); *The Gay Deception* (1935); *The Good Fairy* (1935); *Glamour* (1934); *Counselor at Law* (1933); *Her First Mate* (1933); *Tom Brown of Culver* (1932); *A House Divided* (1931); *The Storm* (1930); *Hell's Heroes* (1930)

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—Robert G. Weiner

ZANUCK, DARRYL. Darryl Francis Zanuck was the head of production at Warner Bros. and later at Twentieth Century-Fox from the mid-1920s to the 1950s. Zanuck's career was one of pioneering firsts for the motion picture industry.

Zanuck was born in Wahoo, Nebraska, on September 5, 1902, the second son of Frank Zanuck and Louise Torpin. In 1917, he lied about his age and signed up with the Omaha National Guard. In World War I, he was assigned to the U.S. Army's 34th division, and later shipped to France, where he served as a runner and messenger.

Zanuck attempted to complete his war-interrupted education at the Los Angeles Manual Arts High School but began a career as an author in 1920. His serial *The Scarlet Ladder* was picked up by Fox Studios, establishing him as a successful independent screenwriter. In 1924, he married Virginia Fox, the daughter of a prominent import-export dealer. That same year, Zanuck met Jack and Harry Warner, and began his career at Warner Bros. Studio as the screenwriter for the *Rin Tin Tin* movies.

By 1925, Zanuck was Warner Bros.' most prolific writer. From 1925 to 1931, over 30 Zanuck plots were put into production, landing him as head of production. In addition, Zanuck took on the role of talent scout, claiming to have discovered and nurtured the careers of major talents, among them James Cagney and Bette Davis.

Warner Bros. was the first studio, in conjunction with Western Electric, to develop Vitaphone, a sound method that would play a prerecorded script and film together to produce a talking picture. With Vitaphone, Zanuck and the Warners produced what many consider the first sound film, *The Jazz Singer*, in 1927.

Zanuck's continued innovation at Warner Bros. pioneered a new cinematic genre: the gangster film. By meshing topics of current interest with a modicum of moral direction, gangster films like *Little Caesar* (1931), and *The Public Enemy* (1931) gained notoriety. Zanuck also utilized new advances in sound and color film to revive the musical. In one musical, *On with the Show*, he was the first to initiate the studio practice of dubbing box-office stars' singing voices with an uncredited singer of greater musical talent.

The dawn of the Depression meant a \$106 million debt for Warner Bros. Resulting pay cuts, layoffs, and studio ownership disagreements caused Zanuck to leave the



Twentieth Century-Fox film mogul Darryl F. Zanuck is seen in 1962 on the set of the movie *The Longest Day*. (AP/Wide World Photos)

studio in 1933. Soon afterward, he started his own independent production company, Twentieth Century, with United Artists' Joseph Schenck and MGM's Louis B. Mayer. In 1935, Fox Films and Twentieth Century merged to form Twentieth Century-Fox.

Zanuck's leadership of Twentieth Century-Fox produced an era of nostalgia films and musicals, creating such stars as child actress Shirley Temple. World War II offered Zanuck the opportunity to produce realistic films and patriotic pictures, bringing fame to another of Zanuck's studio stars—Betty Grable, the GI's pinup girl. Marilyn Monroe achieved fame through Twentieth Century-Fox, as well.

Ever the innovator, Zanuck sought to combat the growing use of the television set by encouraging Hollywood to adopt CinemaScope, a photographic process that widened the size of the 35mm movie picture. This innovation turned mundane films into spectacular theatrical events. Zanuck also pursued films in science fiction in *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951), and paired with songwriter Irving Berlin to capitalize on Berlin's growing appeal. As the novelties began to wear off, Zanuck became bored with production, announcing both his retirement and his divorce from his wife in 1956.

After this, Zanuck moved to Europe to produce independent films under his new company, DFZ Productions. From 1956 to 1962, he produced six films. In 1960, he used his influence to convince Twentieth Century-Fox to produce *The Longest Day*, the highest-grossing black-and-white film of all time. Zanuck eventually returned to Twentieth Century-Fox as Chairman of the Board in 1962. Despite successes like *The Sound of Music* (1965) and *Planet of the Apes* (1967), box-office flops depleted studio profit, eventually allowing the Board to oust Zanuck on April 19, 1971. Returning

to California and to his wife, Virginia, he lived the remainder of his life in seclusion. In October 1979, he was hospitalized for pneumonia, dying on December 22, 1979. He was interred in the Westwood Village Memorial Park Cemetery in Los Angeles.

Selected Filmography

Tora! Tora! Tora! (1970); *The Chapman Report* (1962); *The Longest Day* (1962); *Sanctuary* (1961); *The Roots of Heaven* (1958); *The Barbarian and the Geisha* (1958); *The Sun Also Rises* (1957); *The King and I* (1956); *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (1956); *Viva Zapata!* (1952); *Twelve O'Clock High* (1949); *Pinky* (1949); *Thieves' Highway* (1949); *The Snake Pit* (1948); *Gentleman's Agreement* (1947); *Forever Amber* (1947); *Boomerang!* (1947); *The Shocking Miss Pilgrim* (1947); *The Razor's Edge* (1946); *Somewhere in the Night* (1946); *Wilson* (1944); *Buffalo Bill* (1944); *The Purple Heart* (1944); *Lifeboat* (1944); *The Black Swan* (1942); *A Yank in the R.A.F.* (1941); *Blood and Sand* (1941); *Tobacco Road* (1941); *Western Union* (1941); *The Mark of Zorro* (1940); *The Return of Frank James* (1940); *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940); *Drums along the Mohawk* (1939); *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1939); *Stanley and Livingstone* (1939); *Young Mr. Lincoln* (1939); *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1939); *Jesse James* (1939); *Clive of India* (1935); *Moulin Rouge* (1934); *42nd Street* (1933); *20,000 Years in Sing Sing* (1932); *The Public Enemy* (1931); *Little Caesar* (1931); *The Doorway to Hell* (1930); *Noah's Ark* (1928)

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—Anna Burke

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SUBJECTS

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ACADEMY AWARDS, THE. And the Oscar goes to . . . The Academy Awards, which is universally nicknamed the Oscars, began its tradition of showcasing the best of the best in the film industry in 1928. On the night of May 16, 1929, hosted by Douglas Fairbanks (president of the Academy) in the Blossom Room at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel, roughly 270 guests sat down to dine at a lush banquet with fellow film industry moguls. Dancing and conversation ensued, but soon the orchestra was silenced as MGM Chief Louis B. Mayer decided it was time to get down to business.

The Academy Awards did not start out with the glitz and glamour to which we have grown accustomed. The brainchild of Mayer, the banquet, the awards ceremony, and the Academy were meant to be more bottom line than a glamorous event. Mayer had hoped to unite the power players of the film industry by pushing out the labor unions. When that idea failed, it was decided that the Academy would serve as its own censor, as it was the fourth-largest industry in America. As movies became more risqué, the industry realized it needed a touch of class and a better relationship with the public. A night of glamour with a golden statue given to the best was just what the industry needed.

The awards were first printed on a paper scroll and then cast in gold. The statuette universally known as Oscar was designed by MGM's art director Cedric Gibbons and created by sculptor George Stanley. At first the award was sketched as a knight holding a double-edged sword standing on a reel of film with five holes in the base. These five holes represented the industry's original branches: producers, writers, directors, actors, and technicians. The statuette and the base have since been streamlined, but as cast the statue remains 92.5 percent tin and 7.5 percent copper with a gold-plated exterior. The Oscar statuette is thirteen-and-a-half inches tall and weighs about eight-and-a-half pounds. Although it is unclear how Oscar got his name, the award has come to be called the Nobel Prize of motion pictures.

The awards themselves were originally presented in 12 categories, but have continually grown to encompass the new and innovative ideas and inventions of the film industry. At the first ceremony there was little suspense because the award winners knew they had won three months before the banquet convened. During the second year, however, all of that



Kodak Theater decorated for the Academy Awards, Los Angeles. (Shutterstock)

changed when the results were kept a secret, adding to the allure and mystery surrounding the ceremony. In subsequent years, the winner's list was handed out to the media so it could be in print the next morning, until a newspaper published the names of the winners in the evening post before the awards ceremony was actually broadcast. This led the Academy to adopt the sealed-envelope system in 1941; the system is still used today.

By the time the second awards dinner was held in 1930, enthusiasm for the star-studded event was so great that a Los Angeles radio station produced an hour-long live broadcast of the evening. The ceremony has been broadcast ever since, via radio between 1930 and 1952, and then via television from 1953 forward. Broadcast in color since 1966 and internationally since 1969, the Academy Awards ceremony is now beamed to over 200 countries, dazzling hundreds of millions of movie fan across the globe. For many film enthusi-

asts, the Academy Awards ceremony is the highlight of their cinematic year. Although the broadcast itself often drags, the opportunity to view the parade of stars moving across the red carpet in their designer outfits and "crown jewels" and to exult and bemoan the Academy's choices for the best of the best has made the Awards into a cultural phenomenon.

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—Katherine Ann Fridirici

ACADEMY OF MOTION PICTURE ARTS AND SCIENCES (AMPAS). The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences is an organization of film industry professionals based in Hollywood. It is perhaps best known for its annual achievement awards ceremony, the Academy Awards, popularly known as the Oscars. The AMPAS was formed in January 1927 by a collection of Hollywood executives and actors who wanted to create an in-house organization that would prevent outside parties from wresting away control of the Hollywood film industry. Attendees at the launch of the Academy included Louis B. Mayer, Mary Pickford, Cecil B. DeMille, and Irving Thalberg. By May 1927, the Academy had been granted a charter as a nonprofit organization and had awarded an honorary membership to Thomas Edison; it had also elected its officers, with Douglas Fairbanks serving as president. (Subsequent Academy presidents included Frank Capra, Gregory Peck, and Karl Malden.) Membership in the Academy was, and still is, strictly by invitation only, and is extended only to those whom organization executives believe have made a significant contribution to the motion picture industry.

From its beginnings, the Academy stressed the importance of technological innovations within the film industry. Between 1927 and 1959, the Academy included a specific body for technological matters, and it continues to honor those involved in technological innovation through the Scientific and Technical Awards, first presented in 1931 at the fourth Academy Awards ceremony.

The first Academy Awards ceremony was held in 1929. One of the Academy's first committees had been Awards of Merit, which suggested that awards be bestowed in 12 different categories. In 1929, *Wings* won the first-ever award for Outstanding Picture. During the 1920s and 1930s, the Academy was actively involved in industry politics and labor law issues. However in 1937, during Frank Capra's presidency, the Academy moved away from involvement in labor management issues. In 1937, the Academy published the first *Academy Players Directory* which contained photographs of actors, together with details about their agents. That same year the organization declared itself a forum for all crafts used in the film industry and classified its membership of 350 into five initial branches of membership: actors, directors, writers, producers, and technicians. By opening up its membership to all five groups, the Academy ensured that its membership covered all workers employed by the studios. The Academy's membership grew rapidly, and many more branches of membership were added over the years, including a documentary branch, a music branch, and a public relations branch. The Academy's Board of Governors consists of representatives of each of the branches.

In later years, the Academy began to concentrate on film education. In the 1960s, the Academy began to award scholarships for film students; 1968 saw the first

Academy grants for film-related organizations, and in 1972 the Academy launched the National Film Information Service, which provided library resources to those studying film outside of Los Angeles. The following year the Academy initiated the Student Academy Awards Committee to recognize student filmmakers. The 1970s also saw the start of the Visiting Artists Program in which Academy members traveled throughout the United States giving talks on various aspects of filmmaking.

Over the years, the Academy has become much less political, and it no longer concerns itself with political or economic matters. Instead, it is now mainly known for the Academy Awards ceremony, which is itself increasingly focused on celebrity attendance and fashion, though winning an Academy Award continues to be regarded as prestigious and can help boost a film's box-office returns. The Academy has moved away from its origins as a labor movement to become a body intent on advancing the arts and sciences of the motion picture industry. It aims to recognize outstanding achievement, encourage technical and creative innovation, and facilitate film education.

See also: Academy Awards, *The*

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—Victoria Williams

ACTION-ADVENTURE FILM, THE. Academic genre theorists and popular critics agree on the primary features of the action genre: breathtaking stunts; cutting-edge special effects; and numerous sequences devoted to chases and explosions—all in the service of high-energy, high-escapism cinematic fare (Neale, 2000; Dirks, 2009). Some of these theorists go even further, distinguishing between action films and adventure films, with the latter often focusing on the discovery and exploration of exotic settings as foundational plot points (Dirks, 2009). In adventure films, then, the protagonists usually travel to locales that exist outside our everyday world.

The origin of the term “action-adventure” may be traced to a 1927 article concerning *The Gaucho* (1927), a late silent-era film that starred the first action hero of the cinema, Douglas Fairbanks Sr. (Neale, 2000). Working under D. W. Griffith, Fairbanks began his film acting career playing leads in romantic comedies. Combining the light-hearted romantic persona he had developed in these roles with his natural athleticism, he went on to star as masked crusader Zorro in Fred Niblo's *The Mark of Zorro* (1920). The film made him a superstar. For the next decade, Fairbanks epitomized the silent

cinema swashbuckling adventurer, playing the swordsman D'Artagnan in *The Three Musketeers* (1921) and *The Iron Mask* (1929), and title roles in *Robin Hood* (1922), *The Thief of Bagdad* (1924), *Don Q Son of Zorro* (1925), *The Black Pirate* (1926), and *The Gaucho*. Often doing his own stunts, Fairbanks defined the swashbuckler for the first generation of Hollywood.

As with many silent-era stars, the advent of the sound era ended Fairbanks's career. Errol Flynn would take up the swashbuckler mantle, however. Dashing and boyishly charming, Flynn had only a few minor credits to his name when he was tapped to play the title role in *Captain Blood* (1935). Just as *The Mark of Zorro* had launched the career of Fairbanks, *Captain Blood* catapulted Flynn to superstardom. The roguish actor—he was rumored to have slept with almost every woman in Hollywood—would go on to star in many more adventures, even playing some of the roles that Fairbanks had made famous, most notably the populist hero in *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938). Flynn did not simply remake silent-era swashbucklers, though; staking out his place as the newest swashbuckling hero, Flynn went on to star in films in other genres such as *The Charge of the Light Brigade* (1936), *The Dawn Patrol* (1938), and *They Died with Their Boots On* (1941).

Based on his work in *Gunga Din* (1939), *Safari* (1940), and *The Corsican Brothers* (1941), Douglas Fairbanks Jr. seemed destined to become as big a star as his famous father had been; indeed, some thought the younger Fairbanks might even rival Flynn as the most popular swashbuckling hero in Hollywood. Ironically, though, after America entered World War II, Fairbanks would spend six years as a Navy officer, becoming a real-life hero but fading from the minds of moviegoers. The actor who would become nearly as popular as Flynn—some would even say that among younger audiences he ultimately became more popular than Flynn—was the former Olympic swimmer Johnny Weissmuller. A powerful, laconic figure on-screen, Weissmuller starred in the first Tarzan sound feature, *Tarzan the Ape Man* (1932); he would go to make 11 more Tarzan films, establishing the character as the Lord of the Jungle.



Bullitt (Steve McQueen) talks with Chalmers (Robert Vaughn) in a scene from the movie *Bullitt*, which was released October 17, 1968. (Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images)

After the war, swashbuckling heroes gradually disappeared from the big screen. Admittedly, there were a few notable exceptions: Burt Lancaster in *The Crimson Pirate* (1952), Stewart Granger in *Scaramouche* (1952), and Gregory Peck in *Captain Horatio Hornblower* (1951); but by the 1960s, testosterone-driven action films were becoming increasingly popular with audiences. There were a number of causal factors, it seems, that contributed to the rising popularity of action-oriented action-adventure films: the Supreme Court handed down several decisions that allowed American filmmakers to depict violence—and sexuality—more realistically; technological advances made for more realistic—and more thrilling—action sequences; and a well-established pulp-fiction action hero, James Bond, Agent 007, made his way onto the big screen.

The Bond franchise is the longest-running in film history: 22 pictures (and counting) spanning 46 years. Like the action-adventure swashbucklers that preceded them, Bond movies are generally set in exotic locales. Unlike those earlier films, however, Bond pictures are consistently set during the period of their production. During the Cold War era, for instance, Sean Connery's 007 dealt with Soviet spies in *From Russia with Love* (1963); while later, shortly after Richard Nixon declared America's "war on drugs," Roger Moore's 007 fought international drug traffickers in *Live and Let Die* (1973). George Lazenby, Timothy Dalton, Pierce Brosnan, and Daniel Craig have all appeared as the super-cool superspy with no apparent negative effect on the popularity of the films—although purists argue that there is really only one Bond, Sean Connery.

The popularity of the Bond films inspired other filmmakers to make action-oriented movies during the 1970s. Interestingly, it was at this time that blaxploitation pictures—films with ultrahip, ultradangerous black action heroes—exploded onto American screens. Melvin Van Peebles's *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song* (1971), Gordon Parks Sr.'s *Shaft* (1971), and Gordon Parks Jr.'s *Superfly* (1972)—three of the best of the dozens of blaxploitation pictures that were made during the 1970s—shocked, thrilled, and unsettled audiences, both black and white. The 1970s also saw the release of the films of martial arts phenomenon Bruce Lee. Dissatisfied with playing bit parts in American films, Lee left the United States for Hong Kong, where he began making films with director Raymond Chow and Chow's production company Golden Harvest. After starring in *The Big Boss* (1971), which proved extremely popular in Asia, Lee took control over his next two films, *Fist of Fury* (1972) and *Way of the Dragon* (1972), before going on to make the iconic *Enter the Dragon* (1973), produced jointly by Golden Harvest and Warner Bros. and featuring American martial arts champion Chuck Norris. The few films that Lee made during his too short career—he died mysteriously at the age of 32 in 1973, just six days before *Enter the Dragon* was released in Hong Kong—initiated America's fascination with what would come to be called kung fu cinema.

After Lee's death in 1973, Hong Kong filled America's demand for kung fu pictures with actors such as Sonny Chiba and, later, Jackie Chan. Chiba would make dozens of kung fu action films, but he was a different kind of screen figure than Lee had been. Where Lee had thrilled and amazed audiences with his otherworldly kung fu artistry, Chiba exploded from the screen, a terrifyingly vicious force of nature—brutal and shockingly effective. For his part, Chan would make a series of buddy-movie

comedies—the *Rush Hour* pictures (1997–2007) with Chris Tucker—and likable genre spoofs—*Shanghai Noon* (2000) for instance—that showcased not only his astonishing martial arts skills but also breathtaking stunts, almost all of which were performed by Chan himself.

The 1970s also saw the release of pictures produced by a new generation of filmmakers who were influenced by the troubled 1960s in America. Unique in their counterculture sensibilities, small action pictures such as Richard C. Sarafian's *Vanishing Point* (1971) and Tom Laughlin's *Billy Jack* (1971) appealed to younger, mostly male, counterculture audiences. *Vanishing Point* was the story of a Vietnam vet, Kowalski (Barry Newman), a counterculture dropout who uses his extraordinary skills behind the wheel to thumb his nose at the rule-bound American establishment (ironically, throughout the film he drives a Dodge Challenger, one of Detroit's premier muscle cars of the day); while *Billy Jack*—which also starred Laughlin—was the story of a Vietnam vet, the eponymous Billy Jack, a counterculture dropout who uses his extraordinary skills as a martial artist to thumb his nose at the rule-bound American establishment.

Given the popularity of counterculture films such as *Vanishing Point* and *Billy Jack*, it seems somewhat surprising that action-film moviemakers began to look to the police department to locate their heroes during this same period. Cops and detectives had long been heroes—or noirish antiheroes—in American films, but the majority of the films in which these heroic figures appeared—although many did contain action sequences—were not really action films. The amazing car chase sequences in *Bullitt* (1968) and *The French Connection* (1971), however, began the transformation of cinematic cops into action heroes—Clint Eastwood's turn as Harry Callahan in the *Dirty Harry* films completed it.

In the *Dirty Harry* series, Eastwood's Detective Callahan wields his trademark .44 magnum—the most powerful handgun in the world, says Harry—with the same skill and apparent enjoyment with which Fairbanks and Flynn wielded their rapiers. The suave, relentless, dangerously attractive Callahan tracked down the baddest of the bad guys—a sadomasochistic killer in *Dirty Harry* and other cops in *Magnum Force*, for example—while everything from Molotov cocktails (*Sudden Impact*, 1983) and projectiles from antitank weapons (*The Enforcer*, 1976) exploded around him.

Interestingly, in the same moment that Eastwood was redefining the image of the American movie cop, Burt Reynolds was reimagining the role of the disaffected anti-hero of *Vanishing Point*. Where *Vanishing Point*'s Kowalski embodied the cynicism of the Vietnam era—we know from the very beginning of the film that he will die in the end—the characters that Reynolds made famous in pictures such as *White Lightning* (1973), *Smokey and the Bandit* (1977), and *Cannonball Run* (1981) were just good old boys having fun at the expense of the hapless cops who chased them. Audiences loved these pictures, and although they seemed little more than carbon copies of each other, viewers flocked to theaters to see each new installment. (Each of the former films spawned sequels, and Reynolds went on to play similar roles in *Hooper* [1978] and *Stroker Ace* [1983].) Reynolds ultimately became an international superstar, as well as the highest-paid actor in Hollywood during the late 1970s and early 1980s.

As the 1970s drew to a close and the 1980s opened, Chuck Norris began making a series of war films in which his skills as a martial artist were featured. In 1979, Norris starred in *Good Guys Wear Black*, in which he plays a former Green Beret who served in Vietnam in a special forces unit called the Black Tigers and who, having returned home, must try to save the other members of his unit from a deadly assassin. He would go on to make *Missing in Action, Part I* (1984), *Part II* (1985), and *Part III* (1988), in which he played Colonel James Braddock, a special forces hero who returns to Vietnam to win the war that America had lost. This filmic formula of martial arts star as military hero would be repeated in films starring Steven Seagal, who played a Navy SEAL turned cook in *Under Siege* (1992) and *Under Siege 2* (1995), and Jean-Claude Van Damme, who starred in the implausible *Universal Soldier* as a killed-in-Vietnam-raised-from-the-dead super warrior.

Not coincidentally, it may be argued, the release of these unique hybrid Vietnam veteran-martial arts war films occurred during the 1980s Reagan era, when the nation sought to rebuild its status as the world's leading military superpower and to reimpose the law-and-order society that conservatives felt had been lost during the Kennedy/Johnson-era 1960s. Although they did not star martial arts figures, *Rambo: First Blood Part II* (1985) and the *Die Hard* films embodied these newly minted military and law-and-order sensibilities. In *First Part II*—which starred Sylvester Stallone in a reprise of the role of Colonel John Rambo that he made famous in *First Blood* (1982)—another Vietnam war hero is sent back to Southeast Asia; while in the four *Die Hard* films, New York City detective John McClane (played by Bruce Willis, who initially seemed an odd choice as an action hero but performed brilliantly in the roles) must face down groups of foreign terrorists who threaten America. Ironically, there was also an international flavor to Reagan-era action. Austrian-born Arnold Schwarzenegger—who would go on to become the Republican governor of California—achieved stardom in genre hybrids such as *The Terminator* (1984) (Schwarzenegger was the villain in the original, a point corrected in the sequels *Terminator II: Judgment Day* [1991] and *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines* [2003]); *Predator* (1987); *Commando* (1986); and *True Lies* (1994). And Australian-born Mel Gibson became a star playing a futuristic-outback-cop-turned-vigilante in *Mad Max* (1979) and its sequels, and had even more success in the *Lethal Weapon* (1987) films.

Interestingly, swashbucklers would be revived during the 1990s, after George Lucas and Steven Spielberg launched the *Star Wars* and *Indiana Jones* franchises. Mel Gibson would also have a hand in this revival, as he stepped behind the camera in 1995 to direct—and star in—*Braveheart* (1995), the first of a number of very successful period pieces, including *Rob Roy* (1995), *Gladiator* (2000), and *The Patriot* (2000), with Gibson also starring in the latter. Even the subgenre pirate movie was resurrected, as the fabulously successful *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchise kicked off in 2003. Starring the brilliant Johnny Depp, who crossed golden-age swashbuckling with new millennium attitude in his role as Captain Jack Sparrow, the franchise had already grown to include four films by 2011.

High-impact action films continued to draw audiences—again, mostly young males—during the first decade of the twenty-first century. Two franchises in

particular—*The Fast and the Furious* and *The Transporter*—provided viewers with muscular heroes (Vin Diesel and Jason Statham); edge-of-the seat car racing/chase sequences; and suspension-of-belief stunts. And in an odd bit of cinematic history, former spouses James Cameron—who has directed some of the most popular, big-budget action films ever made, including *Aliens* (1986), *The Abyss* (1989), and the first two *Terminator* pictures—and Kathryn Bigelow—who has directed some of the least-popular, low-budget action films ever made, including *Blue Steel* (1989), *Point Break* (1991), and *Strange Days* (1995)—squared off for the Best Director Oscar in 2010. True to form, Cameron had made the visually astonishing action-adventure movie *Avatar* in 2009, the most expensive picture ever produced, while Bigelow had made *The Hurt Locker*, a spare, small-budget, action-drama set in Iraq. In the end, Bigelow—the extremely rare female director of action films—became the first woman ever to win the Oscar for Best Director.

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—Carey Martin

AFRICAN AMERICANS IN FILM. Perhaps the most significant expression of African Americans in film during the first half of the twentieth century came by way of what were called "race movies." Although generally financed by white investors with screenplays written by white writers, race movies were made by and for African Americans and, because they were released during the Jim Crow era, screened in segregated theatres. One of the most important figures in the development of race movies was the producer, director, and entrepreneur Oscar Micheaux. Micheaux created a thriving studio, produced or directed many successful films, and helped several African American actors achieve a measure of celebrity. He may rightly be compared to white producers such as David O. Selznick, Cecil B. DeMille, and Stanley Kramer, who often developed and controlled the production of films but usually did not direct them. Ironically, certain parallels may be drawn between Micheaux's films and some of those directed by the controversial D. W. Griffith, whose 1915 picture *The Birth of a Nation* fueled the flames of black-white racial tensions during the early twentieth century: while Griffith's domestic melodramas centered on white womanhood debased or usurped, Micheaux's pictures tended to focus on proper black men and women whose hard-fought bourgeois values are constantly under threat.



Film poster for *Lady Sings the Blues*, starring Diana Ross, 1972. (GAB Archive/Redferns/Getty Images)

Race movies generally posited an alternative cinematic universe to that inhabited by whites, with African Americans functioning as filmic counterparts to white archetypes: the lawman, the cowboy, and the romantic hero, for example. While their production values were threadbare, directorial technique basic, and the writing and acting often amateurish, race movies were conceptually interesting and energetically filmed. If the dialogue was occasionally stilted, it was to compensate for the primitive parodies of black speech in films made by whites. Indeed, a stark difference between Hollywood's earliest all-black films and race movies often lay in elocution: Hollywood films depicted African Americans speaking with ludicrously exaggerated accents, while in race movies black actors spoke in realistic and conventional African American vernacular, or in over-pronounced formal English.

Most film scholars agree that the figure that represented the central link between race movies and the mainstream cinema was

Paul Robeson, the singer, actor, and political activist. He was featured in Micheaux's *Body and Soul* (1925), in which he played an escaped convict, and went on to star in the 1933 film adaptation of the Eugene O'Neill play *The Emperor Jones*. Robeson's brooding, powerful big-screen presence perfectly matched O'Neill's dramatic sensibilities, compensating somewhat for the stagy production of the film. Ultimately, Robeson's significance transcends his film achievements, though, as he was the only African American of his time, other than Joe Louis, to become a household name—in both black and white households. Interestingly, while Louis was marketed as a patriotic “good Negro,” Robeson attracted controversy because of his affiliations with the American Communist Party and consequent conflicts with the U.S. government. He did make a number of successful films—*The Proud Valley*, for example—but these were made in Britain, during the time that he was forced to leave the United States and live abroad.

The Hollywood film industry's treatment of African Americans during the first half of the twentieth century was mostly disgraceful. At the dawn of Hollywood, blacks were portrayed as savages unleashed by Reconstruction in Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915), a film that was subjected to protests by African Americans and legal challenges by the NAACP. Ironically, it was this incendiary film that motivated many African Americans to get involved in the film industry. Well before the establishment of race movies as an alternative genre for black audiences, a number of polemical or idealistic films were made as a response to Griffith's film: *The Birth of a Race* (1918) and *By Right of Birth* (1921), for example.

Later, blacks were used for comic relief or to play loyal domestics or exotics in jungle movies or historical epics. Some African American entertainers, mostly with comedy or song-and-dance backgrounds, became notable in the Hollywood mainstream, although they were forced to take roles that perpetuated the most destructive stereotypes of the minstrel era: Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Bill "Bojangles" Robinson (who danced with Shirley Temple when she was Hollywood's top star), Sleep n' Eat (Willie Best) and Stepin Fetchit. While Fetchit's name became as scorned a symbol as Uncle Tom, he does have the distinction of having been featured in the 1929 partly sound version of *Showboat* (where his singing was dubbed) and *Hearts in Dixie* (also made in 1929), the first all-black Hollywood film.

The handful of Hollywood films that explored black themes and that had all-black casts largely capitalized on the growing popularity of jazz and blues music and dance. King Vidor's *Hallelujah* (1929), for instance, although it made its melodramatic prodigal son story more complex by adding certain unique psychological elements, was still filled with song-and-dance interludes that are largely jarringly intrusive. Similarly, Marc Connelly and William Keighley's *Green Pastures* (1935), Vincente Minnelli's *Cabin in the Sky* (1943), and Andrew L. Stone's *Stormy Weather* (1943), while not overtly demeaning in their depiction of their black characters, still focused on the musical abilities of those characters rather than on any dramatic issues they might face.

In 1934, *Imitation of Life* became the first mainstream film to deal with race in a relatively serious way. Starring Claudette Colbert and Fredi Washington, it was also the first film about African Americans "passing" for white (interestingly, Washington, a light-skinned black woman, refused to advance her own career by passing). While the film did present black characters as fully realized figures, however, it nevertheless made clear that the rigid interdiction against breaking social rules regarding racial identity and hierarchy was still very much in place. *Gone with the Wind* (1939), one of the most successful films in Hollywood history, dealt with the antebellum South and the Civil War, as had *Birth of a Nation*. Yet, while *Gone with the Wind* did not seem to exhibit the same venomous attitudes as *Birth of a Nation*—there was no latter-day call for the KKK to rise up to protect white America from the threat of out-of-control young "black bucks"—the former picture did continue to perpetuate the stereotype of "loyal darkies" who choose to remain forever faithful to their masters. Shockingly, although Hattie McDaniel became the first African American to win an Academy Award (for Best Supporting Actress), she was not allowed to appear at the film's Atlanta premiere.

Marked by chilling revelations about the Holocaust, the onset of the Cold War, and the beginnings of the civil rights movement, the early years of the post-World War II era defined a somewhat incongruous period for African Americans involved in the film industry. While on one level Hollywood did become more racially integrated than it had previously been, the filmic breaking of the “color line” that occurred toward the end of the 1940s actually led to a precipitous decline in the production of race movies—nearly half of the hundreds of these films that had been made before World War II were lost. Several Hollywood dramas, though, did explore themes related to African Americans: *Home of the Brave* (1949), for instance, in which a black veteran is treated for wartime trauma; *No Way Out* (1950), in which Sidney Poitier, in his debut, plays a doctor threatened by the racist brother of one of his patients; and *Intruder in the Dust* (1949), an adaptation of Faulkner’s novel about an African American falsely accused of a crime. Still, while these films did treat black characters seriously, they addressed the problem of race in American only obliquely, at best.

During the 1950s, a small number of black actors, including Poitier, Harry Belafonte, Dorothy Dandridge, and Lena Horne, achieved a certain level of movie stardom with films in which they appeared focusing on their characters. As before, though, the majority of the most important films of this period featuring African Americans dealt largely with the issue of blacks passing as white. In Elia Kazan’s *Pinky* (1949), for instance, a young light-skinned black woman—played by Jeanne Crain, a white actress “passing,” as it were, as a black woman passing for white—who has passed, rejects a life married to a successful white doctor and opens up a clinic and nursery school for black children; while in Douglas Sirk’s 1959 remake of *Imitation of Life*, a young black woman who passes rejects her race as well as her family, but comes to grief and repents only after her mother’s death; and in Alfred L. Werker’s *Lost Boundaries* (1949), an entire family passes in the interest of becoming upwardly mobile.

The 1960s saw a political rivalry develop between Dr. Martin Luther King’s moderate integrationists and militant black nationalists, such as Malcolm X. This rivalry was reflected in the American cinema, as more radical films about the black experience were released alongside more mainstream pictures. Melvin Van Peebles, for example, challenged audiences with his *Sweet Sweetback’s Baadasssss Song* (1970) and *Watermelon Man* (1971), while Robert Downey—a white director—made *Putney Swope* (1969), which featured a black protagonist treating conventional society with derision. Ossie Davis, a distinguished black actor who gave the eulogy for Malcolm X, directed *Cotton Comes to Harlem* (1970), which was based on a novel by Chester Himes, an African American writer who had long used crime fiction as a vehicle for caustic depictions of the black experience; and Ivan Dixon adapted *The Spook Who Sat by the Door* (1973), in which he took a kind of pulp-fiction approach to political advocacy.

Significantly, the more radical films of black directors like Van Peebles, Davis, and Dixon led to the production of what may be described as the crudely assertive blaxploitation films. Ironically, two of the figures who helped initiate this movement were Poitier and Gordon Parks Sr. Poitier had become a major movie star based on his work in mainstream films such as *The Defiant Ones* (1958), *In the Heat of the Night* (1967), *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner* (1967), and *To Sir, with Love* (1967), but in 1972 he

stepped behind the camera to make *Buck and the Preacher* (1972). A trope of traditional westerns, the gritty picture starred Poitier as a post–Civil War wagon master and Belafonte as the Preacher. For his part, Gordon Parks Sr. made the film that many suggest truly initiated blaxploitation, *Shaft* (1971), which starred Richard Roundtree as the ultracool, seemingly invincible uber-detective John Shaft.

The success of *Shaft* opened the floodgates for the production of films featuring black action heroes played by charismatic ex-athletes—Jim Brown and Fred Williamson are notable examples. Pam Grier's *Foxy Brown* (1974) and Tamara Dobson's *Cleopatra Jones* (1973) extended the genre to women. Afterwards came numerous twists of every genre imaginable: *Black Caesar* (1973), *Black Gestapo* (1975), *Blacula* (1972), *Blackenstein* (1973). Parks's son, Gordon Parks Jr., following in his father's footsteps, also directed one of the most influential blaxploitation pictures of the day, *Superfly* (1972). Ultimately, the quality of blaxploitation pictures declined, and the enthusiasm for them waned after little more than half a decade.

A string of mainstream 1970s films offering sympathetic and positive images of African Americans acted as a counterpart to the blaxploitation pictures of this period. Set during the years of the Great Depression, *Sounder* (1972), for instance, was an exercise in social realism and restrained sentiment; while *Claudine* (1974) offered audiences a contemporary take on romantic comedy from a black perspective. Two period pieces—*The Great White Hope* (1970), a fictionalized biography of boxer Jack Johnson, and the TV film *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* (1973)—were historical testaments to black endurance and dignity. While these films were made by white directors, the lead roles showcased the talents of gifted black actors such as James Earl Jones, Cicely Tyson, Paul Winfield, and Diahann Carroll. Many of these films won awards and succeeded in penetrating the mainstream market.

Between the poles of blaxploitation and edifying social films, comedy served as a significant vehicle for blacks in the 1970s. Somewhat surprisingly, Sidney Poitier became an important journeyman director at this time, making—and starring in—films such as *Uptown Saturday Night* (1974) and *Let's Do It Again* (1975). Poitier, who many thought was too dignified to play comedic roles, proved to have a raucous sense of humor as a filmmaker. Richard Pryor, a successful stand-up comic who had had a supporting role alongside Diana Ross and Billy Dee Williams in the memorable 1972 biopic of the life of Billie Holiday, *Lady Sings the Blues*, also emerged as a major screen talent at this time. Pryor's genius for stand-up, by turns personal and surreal, was given expression in two concert films: *Richard Pryor: Live in Concert* (1979) and *Live on the Sunset Strip* (1982), which were remarkably popular with both black and white audiences. It may be argued that the two successful films that Pryor made with Gene Wilder at this time, *Silver Streak* (1976) and *Stir Crazy* (1980)—they would go on to star in *See No Evil, Hear No Evil* (1989) and *Another You* (1991)—paved the way for black comedians such as Eddie Murphy in the decades that followed.

Although a small-screen vehicle, mention should be made of the TV miniseries *Roots* (1977), which was enormously successful during the 1970s. Though criticised by some as an overly sentimental melodrama, the powerful family saga, adapted from Alex Haley's novel of the same name, was the first epic portrayal of the African

American experience covering the period from slavery to the civil rights era. The series riveted white audiences, many of whom were shocked by what they learned about the treatment blacks had received—and continued to endure—since they were forcibly brought to what became the United States in the early seventeenth century.

Ironically, during the Reagan Era 1980s, a period when black America suffered social and economic reversals, African Americans achieved major successes in Hollywood. Eddie Murphy, who jumped from the extraordinarily popular satirical sketch show *Saturday Night Live* to the big screen, became the world's most bankable star with box-office hits such as *48 Hours* (1982), *Trading Places* (1983), and especially *Beverly Hills Cop* (1984). It was also during this time that Spike Lee, the first major mainstream African American director, emerged. He came of age with other 1980s proto-indie directors such as Jim Jarmusch, Hal Hartley, John Sayles, and Susan Seidelman, writing and directing two small independent pictures, *She's Gotta Have It* (1986) and *School Daze* (1988). His breakout moment, though, came in 1989, with the release of the controversial, culturally complex *Do the Right Thing* (1989), a film that captured the racial tensions simmering in pre-Giuliani New York. Following on the success of *Do the Right Thing*, Lee would go on to produce two other small-budget films, *Mo' Better Blues* (1990) and *Jungle Fever* (1991). To the surprise of many, Lee was tapped to direct the big-budget studio production *Malcolm X* (1992), which his critics—and even some of his supporters—thought was too much picture for him. The film turned out to be brilliant. After the success of *Malcolm X*, Lee found himself in the position of being one of the most prominent cinematic spokespeople for black America, and in addition to making more feature films, he would also go on to make several notable documentaries dealing with controversial topics such as the infamous 1963 bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama (*4 Little Girls*, 1997), and the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina (*When the Levees Broke*, 2006).

Significantly, Lee had cast Denzel Washington in his 1990 film *Mo' Better Blues*, and when he was chosen to direct *Malcolm X*, Lee insisted that Washington be given the lead role. Although Washington had already won a Best Supporting Actor Oscar for his work in *Glory*, many thought that he was not right for the role of Malcolm X. They could not have been more wrong, as the actor transformed himself into the slain black activist. The performance solidified Washington's status as one of the most important—and bankable—actors in Hollywood, and he has gone on to make a series of highly regarded pictures, ultimately winning the Best Actor Oscar for his portrayal of Alonzo, the rogue cop in *Training Day*. Washington once again teamed with Lee to make *Inside Man* (2006) and *Inside Man 2* (2010).

Lee was joined by other successful black directors during the 1990s. John Singleton, for instance, had a critical and box-office hit with his raw, provocative *Boyz n' the Hood* (1991). Interestingly, while Lee had included rap music in the soundtrack for *Do the Right Thing*, *Boyz n' the Hood* was a sort of filmic analogue to the controversial genre of gangsta rap that was embraced by some and reviled by others. The picture ultimately earned Singleton an Academy Award nomination for Best Director. The Hughes Brothers (identical twins Albert and Allen) followed *Boyz n' the Hood* with another offering about the angst-filled lives of young black gangsters, *Menace II Society* (1993).

By the time the new millennium dawned, an increasing number of African American actors had established themselves in America's motion picture mainstream. In addition to Denzel Washington, actors such as Morgan Freeman, Samuel L. Jackson, Laurence Fishburne, Danny Glover, Forest Whitaker, and Wesley Snipes achieved renown and became major Hollywood players. Will Smith, a stand-up comic who also had a successful recording career, become a major international attraction. Smith has proved to be a versatile performer, not only taking on comedic roles but also playing serious characters; indeed, his portrayal of boxing legend Muhammad Ali in Michael Mann's *Ali*, earned him an Academy Award nomination for Best Actor. Halle Berry, well known for her stunning appearance, proved that she was much more than just another pretty face, ultimately earning a Best Actress Oscar—the first African American woman to do so—for her disturbing portrayal of Leticia Musgrove opposite Billy Bob Thornton in *Monster's Ball* (2001).

In 2009, Lee Daniels's *Precious: Based on the Novel 'Push' by Sapphire* was released to great critical acclaim. Exploring the tortured life of the obese, illiterate, wholly disaffected teenaged-mother Claireece "Precious" Jones, the film went on to garner Academy Award nominations for Best Picture, direction, editing, writing, Best Actress in a Lead Role (Gabourey Sidibe as Precious), and Best Actress in a Supporting Role, which went to Mo'Nique for her portrayal of Mary, the angry, terrifically abusive mother of Precious. For many, the film—devoid of the simplistic stereotypes and destructive racist messages that have marked so many pictures about the black experience—was seen as a watershed moment in the long narrative arc of African Americans in the cinema.

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—Dimitri Keramitas

ANCIENT WORLD IN FILM, THE. Antiquity has had an incalculable influence on the themes and language of cinema. While less numerous than fantasy and mythological films inspired by the ancient world, ancient history films are a significant genre. Nominally dealing with the past, these films reveal more about the contemporary world in which they were made and are best viewed as explorations of contemporary American ideals and anxieties. Films from the height of the ancient epic cycle of the 1950s and 1960s, for example, generally reinforce conservative Christian values and link those values to the self-image of Cold War America (Pomeroy, 2008; Wyke, 1997). However, the same films can be read as warnings that America, too, may succumb to corruption and hubris. Of ancient civilizations, Rome has cast the longest shadow over the modern West, and films about Rome greatly outnumber those about other ancient civilizations. Interestingly, the cinematic image of Rome is caught between the glorification of Roman power and glory, and criticism of the Empire's oppressive nature.

The ancient world is not always accessible to modern audiences, who may only know the broad outlines of its people and events. Individual characters often are lost in the spectacle of vast armies and gigantic buildings, for which ancient epics are famous. Filmmakers also face a challenge in balancing historical accuracy and



Woody Strode (left) faces off with actor Kirk Douglas in scene from *Spartacus*, directed by Stanley Kubrick, 1960. (J. R. Eyerman/Time Life Pictures/Getty Images)

“dramatic necessity” (Solomon, 2001). These issues are typically resolved by simplification of history, compression of events, and a focus on universal themes like freedom, love, or ambition. Antiquity, therefore, becomes a site of allegorical explorations of modern political and social issues. Two silent films exemplify this technique. In *The Ten Commandments* (1923), the story of the Exodus unfolds as a modern morality tale in which a corrupt architect breaks every commandment on his road to ruin. *Intolerance* (1916) juxtaposes the parallel “hopes and perplexities” of ancient Babylon, the life of Jesus, sixteenth-century France, and contemporary America. The increasingly rapid crosscutting among the stories emphasizes the common theme of injustice across time.

Using ancient history as allegory is facilitated by the free mixture of fact, speculation, and fiction. This is particularly common in Roman-era religious films (*Ben-Hur*, 1925 and 1959; *Sign of the Cross*, 1932; *Last Days of Pompeii*, 1935; *Quo Vadis*, 1951; *The Robe*, 1953; *Demetrius and the Gladiators*, 1954; *The Silver Chalice*, 1954; and *Barabbas*, 1962). In these films, New Testament narratives and fictional stories are set against, and interwoven with, actual Roman history. Nonreligious films, such as the *Fall of the Roman Empire* (1964) and *Gladiator* (2000), follow a similar model in telling historical stories through the eyes of fictional characters.

The process of adapting past to present in order to enhance dramatic appeal inevitably leads to the production of films that are less than historically accurate. While the wildest examples of historical inaccuracy have to be the war rhinos and ninja Persians depicted in *300* (2006), *Last Days of Pompeii* notably collapses the roughly half-century between Christ’s crucifixion and Vesuvius’s eruption into a single decade. History may be manipulated in films for reasons other than enhancing dramatic appeal, however. For instance, in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1966), a hyperactive mix of ancient Rome and modern Broadway, the film’s genre-bending excess is used to make serious points about the injustice of slavery. Militarism and the epic convention of the triumphal march are also thoroughly mocked in *Forum*. Miles Gloriosus (Leon Greene) rides into Rome singing a love song to war (and to himself), bragging of his many atrocities, and declaring “I am a parade!” Other films use anachronism in order to echo contemporary events. *Solomon and Sheba* (1959), for example, mingles the ancient and modern Middle East, imagining a summit meeting of “absolute monarchs” plotting against the constitutional monarch Solomon; and as with modern Arab states, the despots try to “drive Israel into the sea.”

The dominant political theme in ancient history films is the struggle for freedom against tyranny and injustice. If besieged Israelites, Greeks, or Christians may be read as the precursors of modern Americans, and ancient despots as fascists or communists, ancient epics become allegories of twentieth-century political struggles. While the historical settings may vary, similar themes and images are used. *The Ten Commandments* (1923, 1956) depicts an authoritarian Egypt bound in slavish worship of god-kings and sadistic in its treatment of the Hebrew slaves. Director Cecil B. DeMille’s prologue to the 1956 film even declares that one lives either by God’s law or under the rule of a dictator. Similar ideas unfold in films about ancient Greece. *300 Spartans* (1962), for instance, contrasts the freedom of Greece with the one-man rule of the Persian king Xerxes and his multinational army of slaves; and *Alexander the Great* (1956) dismisses

the Persian “slave army” as no match for the free Macedonians. The hypermasculinized *300* (which is really a fantasy film despite its historical setting) pushes the imagery further, describing Persia as a “hungry beast” leading the savage “hordes of Asia” on a quest to extinguish the life and liberty of Greece. To stress the point, Xerxes’ “horde” is depicted as an inhuman army of piercing fetishists, seemingly recruited from the same demonic pit as Sauron’s legions in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (2001–2003).

However, it is Roman history films that provide the darkest visions of decadence, corruption, and the misuse of power. Decadence (designed both to attract and repel audiences) is signaled in many ways: empress Poppaea bathing in milk (*Sign of the Cross*); Nero’s corpulent, bejeweled fingers (*Quo Vadis*); and the bloodshed of gladiatorial matches (*Spartacus*). It may be, though, that the greatest corruption comes from the empire’s indifference to the misery of its slaves and subjects. *Ben-Hur* (1959) provides what may be the most durable image of Roman cruelty. Innocent of any crime, Judah Ben-Hur (Charlton Heston) is tortured and made a galley slave (inaccurately, as Roman warships did not use slaves as rowers). Roman corruption seems inevitably to lead to persecution, especially of Christians. Cinema’s Christians, in contrast to the pagan perversions that surround them, are paragons of egalitarianism and virtue. They even renounce slavery, though early Christianity actually did little to challenge the institution of slavery (Finlay, 1980). When the persecution of Christians is shown on film, it not only emphasizes the injustice of religious intolerance, but also the sheer horror of arena and torture chamber. Considering its age (1932), it can be argued that *Sign of the Cross* is unmatched in the nightmare tortures it depicts on screen (women mauled by a gorilla and a crocodile; a man trampled by an elephant). Similar horrors drive *Quo Vadis*, *Demetrius and the Gladiators*, and other religious epics. Ironically, persecution and the excessive temptations of court life may be part of the films’ audience appeal (Wyke, 1997).

While drawing from numerous historical and literary sources, post–World War II Roman films were often thinly veiled indictments of totalitarianism and the Holocaust. Scenes of the celebration of Roman triumphs in *Quo Vadis* and *Gladiator*, for example, strongly resemble the Nuremberg rally captured by German filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl in her unsettling documentary *Triumph of the Will* (1935); while the “Roman” salute used in virtually every ancient history film is a conscious echo of those used by Mussolini’s fascists and Hitler’s Nazis. Significantly, while the Romans appear never to have actually used a Roman-style salute, its use in artwork and plays during the nineteenth century fixed the image in the public imagination (Winkler, 2009); after World War II, the gesture could not help but bring to mind the fascism and Nazism it so chillingly represented. In *Quo Vadis*, then, the emperor Nero is deliberately depicted as an ancient Hitler (Winkler, 2009) who viciously orders the extermination of Christians and obsesses over an architectural model of Rome—one that was actually commissioned by Mussolini (Wyke, 1997). Later, a panicked Nero makes Christians the scapegoats for his own incendiary destruction of Rome, burned to the ground to allow for his supreme act of artistic expression. Recall that the young Hitler had aspirations of becoming a successful artist and the allegory is complete. These allusions transform the Roman Empire from a mere historical phenomenon into the

archetype of oppression. As fascism has tended to blur effortlessly with communism in the American imagination, Roman tyranny serves as a substitute for both America's wartime and postwar ideological foes.

While tyranny can be institutional, individual rulers are the primary target of film-makers' criticism. While most rulers are, at a minimum, portrayed as ambitious, like the wily Machiavellians of *Cleopatra* (1934, 1963), many films explore the perils of unchecked power. Crassus (*Spartacus*) exploits the crisis of the Spartacus revolt to become dictator over Rome, only to use his power to settle political and personal scores (another inaccuracy, as the real Crassus never remotely possessed such power). Absolute power can also endanger those who wield it. Khufu (*Land of the Pharaohs*, 1955) is so obsessed with greed and building his pyramid he is heedless of the plight of his subjects and to the machinations of his second wife. Even biblical hero David faces divine wrath when he abuses his power in order to have Bathsheba (*David and Bathsheba*, 1951, and *King David*, 1985). Power may even drive otherwise admirable rulers insane, as the pictures *Alexander the Great* and *Alexander* (2004) suggest. It is not surprising that the downfall or humbling of despots climaxes so many films, with one of the most dramatic examples being Nero's fall in *Quo Vadis*. Ramses (*Ten Commandments*) sees his army destroyed by the Red Sea, and even Xerxes wins only a pyrrhic victory over the Spartans (*300 Spartans* and *300*).

It may be argued that the Roman trifecta of Caligula, Nero, and Commodus takes the "evil ruler" motif to its campy, perverse perfection. The obviously unstable Caligula of *The Robe* and its sequel *Demetrius and the Gladiators* is a vicious, raving lunatic. He treats the titular robe of Christ as magic to be mastered, even killing a man to see if the robe can resurrect him. The second-century emperor Commodus is deeply troubled but is also starkly contrasted with his father, the benevolent philosopher-emperor Marcus Aurelius. In *Fall of the Roman Empire* (a fall he largely triggers), Commodus slowly succumbs to giggling madness, first imagining the gods laughing and then coming to believe he is really hearing them. In *Gladiator*, haunted by his father's disapproval, Commodus lashes out at everyone around him, entertains incestuous plans for his sister, and empties the treasury to buy public approval with the Coliseum. Cinema's Nero is a villain apart, no doubt due to his persecution of Christians and the historically false accusation that he burned much of Rome to the ground. Filmic depictions of Nero are unabashedly negative, with Charles Laughton's (*Sign of the Cross*) and Peter Ustinov's (*Quo Vadis*) camp interpretations being particularly vivid. In these films, and *The Silver Chalice*, Nero presides over a court of fawning sycophants who fuel his delusions. Dom DeLuise's Nero (*History of the World*, 1981) contributes a bored gluttony to the imperial repertoire. These stereotypical emperors—sadistic, bloated, and crazed—are ultimately the victims of their own power, and it is the corrupting influence of power that is the true villain. Interestingly, it is a mark of nobility that Livius (*Fall of the Roman Empire*) refuses, and Maximus (*Gladiator*) resists, absolute power when it is offered to them.

This bloody trail of persecution and corruption is ironically paralleled by a contradictory cinematic image: the dream of a cosmopolitan society of equality and peace. The dream itself is closely associated with Alexander the Great, a conqueror whose

empire briefly linked Europe and Asia. *Alexander the Great* symbolizes the cosmopolitan dream in a mass wedding Alexander arranges between his Greek officers and Persian women. In *Alexander* he pointedly rejects the racism of his generals and teacher Aristotle by marrying a Central Asian woman. In both films, Alexander proves to be tragically unsuccessful, and he dies before consolidating his worldwide commonwealth. Alexander's dream resonates strongly in *Cleopatra* (1963), where the Greco-Egyptian queen urges first Caesar, then Antony to create the Alexandrian empire. Indeed, it is in Alexander's tomb that Cleopatra enlists Caesar to the cause of "one world-one nation-one people."

The image of world empire also pervades Roman-era films, despite the generally negative cinematic image of ancient Rome. Prologues to *Quo Vadis* and *Spartacus* pointedly expound upon Roman glory and prosperity before denouncing Roman tyranny. The Roman Messala (*Ben-Hur*, 1959), admittedly a chauvinistic thug, is nonetheless correct when he boasts of the Empire's order, roads, and trade; the epic chariot race depicted later in the film highlights the Empire's diversity. Even the Judean rebels in *Life of Brian* (1979) compose an awkwardly long list of benefits derived from Roman rule. The most celebratory vision of Pax Romana is in *Fall of the Roman Empire*. Marcus Aurelius's speech to a diverse gathering of governors and rulers characterized the Roman Empire as a commonwealth of free nations, transcending race and religion, and even willing to embrace the barbarians. This optimistic version (soon to be shattered by Commodus), sees Rome almost as a proto-United States, a nation of nations and a model for a united world.

While many films embrace or at least acknowledge this cosmopolitan image, it is usually overshadowed by the crueler realities of Rome. Classical Rome was too authoritarian and pagan to be a fully satisfactory model for most audiences. However, Roman history also offers the Christian world-state as an alternative. *Quo Vadis*, for example, ends with the implicit hope (symbolized by Marcus Vinicius's conversion to Christianity) of a Christianized empire that will heal ancient ills and inaugurate a society of true freedom. *Quo Vadis* (as well as many of the other religious films previously discussed) presents idealized Roman-era Christian communities living in quiet harmony. Even in *Fall of the Roman Empire*, an essentially secular epic, Timonides' utopian community of "reformed" barbarians is subtly revealed to be Christian-inspired. The Roman and Christian visions become fully harmonized in *Sign of the Pagan* (1954), where fifth-century Christian Rome makes civilization's last stand against Attila the Hun's pagan horde. The Christian world triumphs, even if the film indulges in some inaccurate optimism (Attila's death changed little and the Western Roman Empire fell 23 years later).

The ambivalent political legacy of Roman civilization has a particular resonance for the United States. As the heirs of Roman civilization, the Western world continues to be haunted by Rome's legacy, even as it endlessly recycles its symbolism, architecture, and language. The United States, where "a second Senate . . . [sits] upon a second Capitol Hill" (Holland, 2003) is equally part of this tradition, even if the Romanesque trappings of the Founders have evolved into the Pax Americana of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The conservative Christianity and political liberalism of the post-World War II epic cycle does not so much reject the power of the Roman Empire

(no more than it could reject American power) but rather expresses the wish to save Rome/America from its more corrupt and immoral tendencies. It is therefore fitting that American films give us a Rome (and to some extent, an Egypt) that is a paradox of darkness and light. Romans are idealized as figures of honor, military prowess, and accomplishment. The Roman Empire at its height is something for the American viewer to marvel at and perhaps to compare to their nation's own global predominance (Cyrino, 2004).

This power is made manifest in the inevitable march of resplendent armies surrounded by cheering crowds and martial music. *Ben-Hur* (1959) offers no fewer than three sequences of marching Roman armies: first through Nazareth, then Jerusalem, then in the most spectacular sequence, a triumph through Rome itself. Armor-clad armies, mounted on horses or chariots and wielding gleaming weapons, have a terrible beauty that epic films celebrate. Filmmakers certainly never fail to linger over the aesthetics of ancient war machines. However, the same films remind us of Roman taste for gladiatorial games, the Roman crucifixion of Jesus, and persecution of Jews and Christians. It is a simple fact that Roman glory was built on conquest and slavery, and the Republic slid slowly into the pit of authoritarianism. The cinematic view of Roman history suggests that whatever the ideals of Roman civilization, when ideals are corrupted by power, they die. *Spartacus*, perhaps, has the most explicit depiction of this transition from liberty to police state, when Crassus compiles lists of the disloyal like an ancient Joe McCarthy (Wyke, 1997). McCarthyist allusions also appear in *Ben-Hur* (1959) and *The Robe*. *Quo Vadis* warns that "with power inevitably comes corruption." If, too, as *Fall of the Roman Empire* states ominously, great empires are destroyed from within, America may also become a victim of its own success and lose itself in decadence, corruption, and perhaps even political repression (Wyke, 1997).

By linking past and present, ancient history films provide an opportunity to explore universal themes of the human condition. The majority of American films set in antiquity, however, are laden with metaphors of contemporary American ideals and fears: Ancient heroes tend to serve as stand-ins for America's leaders, reinforcing America's self-image as a bastion of morality, equality, and freedom. Yet ancient civilizations, especially Rome, offer a warning about the use and misuse of power that also applies to modern American society. It may be, then, that films set in antiquity tell us less about the distant past than they do about ourselves.

See also: DeMille, Cecil B.; *Gladiator*; Religion and Nationalism in Film; Religion and Censorship in Film

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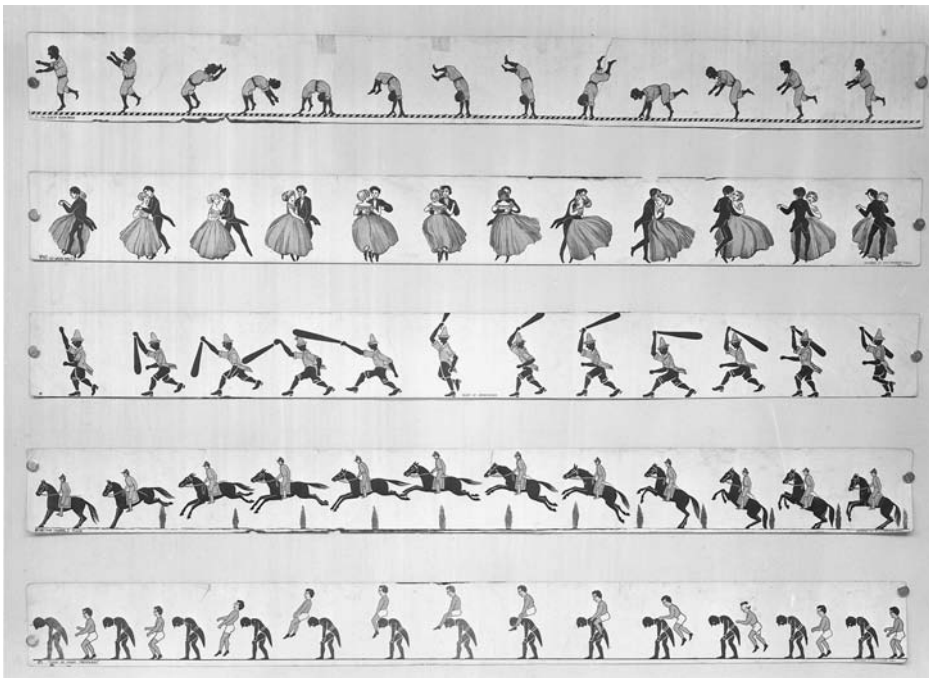
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—Karl Leib

ANIMATION. Animation is the rapid display of a sequence of images, each slightly different from the last, to give the illusion of motion. Animation can be shown through two-dimensional artwork or the images of three-dimensional models in different positions. There is no single person credited with inventing animation, as many people independently developed concepts across the world and throughout history that would lead to the creation of animation as we know it today.

Sequential art has existed since ancient times, but devices specifically designed for animation did not, for the most part, begin to appear until the 1800s. The zoetrope was created in 1834 by William George Horner. The device consists of a cylinder with



Original zoetrope picture bands, c. 1860s. A zoetrope is a cylinder with a series of pictures on the inner surface that, when viewed through slits with the cylinder rotating, give an impression of continuous motion. The idea that a sequence of drawings should be made on a band of paper to be viewed in a rotating cylinder was first suggested by Simon Stampfer in 1833. However, it wasn't until the 1860s, when several patents were obtained, that the zoetrope appeared on the market. It remained a popular parlor toy for the rest of the century. (SSPL/Getty Images)

vertical slits cut around the sides. Around the inside of the cylinder, a series of pictures is placed, directly opposite the slits. If one looks through the slits while the cylinder is spun, this produces the illusion of motion. Similar to the zoetrope was the phenakistoscope, invented in 1831 by two men, the Belgian Joseph Plateau and the Austrian Simon von Stampfer. This device consists of a flat disk mounted on a spinner, with a series of slits around the circumference. By looking through the slits into the mirror as the disc spins, the images appear to be in motion, similar to a zoetrope.

The praxinoscope was invented in 1877 by French scientist Charles-Émile Reynaud, and was an improvement to the zoetrope. While it used the same concept of a cylinder with a series of sequential images set on the inside, the images were viewed through a series of stationary mirrors, allowing a steadier and hence clearer image. Charles created another model, which could be projected onto a screen and could utilize a far larger number of images. This device was called the *Théâtre Optique*, and with it, Reynaud was able to create the first truly animated films. This device was eventually overshadowed by the Lumière brothers' photographic film projector, but animation continued to thrive, as video technology improved throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century.

Perhaps the most recognizable form of animation is *cel animation*, which was the dominant form of animation throughout most of the twentieth century. Traditionally, individual drawings, varying only slightly from one to the next, are traced or photocopied onto transparent acetate sheets called "cels," which are filled with paints in assigned colors or tones on the side opposite of the line drawings. These are then photographed one by one onto film set against a painted background. Traditional animation techniques can be seen in films such as Walt Disney's *Snow White*.

Since the late twentieth century, computers have become a large part of the process. Artwork can be scanned into a computer system, where computer programs can be used to color them, add special effects, and simulate camera movement. From there, the animation can be placed onto many various mediums, whether traditional 35 mm film stock or digital video formats. *The Lion King* is an example of traditional animation aided by computer technology.

Stop motion is created by physically manipulating real-world objects and photographing them one frame at a time, and then showing them in sequence. There are many different forms of stop-motion, each named after the medium used to create the models being photographed. Clay, construction paper, toys, puppets, even live humans, can all be used in stop-motion. Some examples are *Wallace and Gromit* (clay), *South Park* (construction paper cutouts), *Robot Chicken* (toys), and *The Nightmare Before Christmas* (puppets with armatures).

Computer animation is the most recent form of the process and can be used for a variety of techniques. Two basic subtypes are "2D animation" and "3D animation." The former consists of using two-dimensional graphics, essentially digital drawings, and editing them into various poses onto a background, simulating traditional animation. Many video games prior to 1994 used 2D graphics, and the technique is still used for certain systems today. However, since the beginning of the twenty-first century, many televised cartoon shows are created partially, or completely, using 2D computer animation.

Employing three-dimensional digital models, 3D animation is rigged with a digital armature that can be manipulated by an animator to give motion to the model. As computer technology increases in sophistication, 3D computer graphics become more and more able to simulate real-world visuals and motions. This form of animation is becoming increasingly common, especially for animated films. Examples of such films are the *Shrek* and *Toy Story* series.

See also: Disney, Walt

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—Benjamin O'Neill

AUTEUR THEORY. Often simplified and misunderstood, the “auteur theory” echoes and rehearses the larger debates about the value, meaning, and viability of “authorship” that have occupied cultural criticism since the latter half of the twentieth century.

The theory engages several thorny questions. How can the idea of authorship—of a single, unitary consciousness that controls the creation of a given text—be applied to cultural products, like commercial films, that require complex industrial mechanisms for their creation? How is it possible to identify a single “author” of a commercial film given the number of creative forces involved in its making? What would be the distinguishing characteristics of the author’s personality (assuming one could identify such an author), particularly given the traces of all the other artists’ contributions to the final film product? And finally, does the concept of film authorship add aesthetic meaning to the commercial work under question, and if so, what is the value of that meaning?

More complicated than they may at first appear, these are the questions the auteur theory tries not so much to answer as to turn into an aesthetic battleground, a call to arms for cinephiles who believe film authorship must be ascribed, at least insofar as it can be, to the controlling vision and sensibility of one artist: the film’s director.

Today, the assertion that a director is the de facto author of a film does not seem particularly shocking or revelatory—a sign, perhaps, of the effect auteur critics have had in shaping the public’s attitudes toward accepting the primacy of the director. But before the World War II, it seemed a truism that the sheer number of creative people needed to craft a commercial film—scriptwriters and actors, cinematographers and composers, producers and editors—rendered any attempt to identify an individual author a quixotic enterprise. In classical Hollywood filmmaking, for instance, studio productions depended on “the genius of the system” for a film’s conception, financing,

casting, technical facilities, shooting, publicity, and distribution. Assigning authorship to a “product” constructed by a well-oiled machine seemed a superficial and superfluous ploy—a matter mostly for publicists heralding, say, a new “Howard Hawks” production.

The case of Hawks is central to the question. How could one contend Howard Hawks was the author of a “Howard Hawks” film, particularly when his work resulted from the efforts of so many other strong “authors”? For instance, in the screwball comedy *His Girl Friday* (1940), the screenplay is adapted, without credit, by Ben Hecht from the play *The Front Page* he wrote with Charles MacArthur, and its star chemistry is provided by Cary Grant and Rosalind Russell; and in the detective vehicle *The Big Sleep* (1946), the screenplay is co-adapted by William Faulkner from a novel by Raymond Chandler and relies on the offscreen chemistry of Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall to fuel the on-screen frisson. Hawks, the director in each circumstance, was a fine craftsman certainly; but was it not more accurate to call him, in effect, not the author but the director of multiple authors who have been assigned roles in the larger system, more accurate to say that his films were authored by the sum total of all the artists and technicians supplied by the studios, or by the system itself?

Perhaps. But in the 1950s, finally afforded the opportunity to see the flood of Hollywood films that had been held up from export during the World War II—including pictures such as *Citizen Kane* (1941) and *The Big Sleep*—a group of French writers and filmmakers associated with the influential journal *Cahiers du cinéma* advanced the polemical argument that not only was the nature of film authorship worth considering theoretically, but that it was precisely that authorship that was the single most important factor in determining a film’s aesthetic value, particularly of a film produced within the Hollywood industrial system. Film was not a literature, written in words; it was also not merely an industry, written by technology and money; it was, rather, something else: a cinema, written in images. And works of cinema were authored not by scriptwriters or producers but by directors, the artists who had the greatest influence on how a given film’s *mise-en-scène* contributed to its overall visual (cinematic), not verbal (literary) meaning. These writers—who included the young critics-turned-filmmakers François Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard—passionately posited that only the director invested a film with the nuances and significances of an identifiable style and vision that could be noted and traced among other films; only the director controlled the *cinematic value*, which is to say, the visual aspects of the work.

Simplified, the idea may seem obvious. Why the need for a “theory” to suggest directors shaped the images of films? After all, the fame of European directors like Jean Renoir and Fritz Lang, whose reputations preceded them to Hollywood, was based on the unique temperaments and styles they imparted to their work. Even powerful Hollywood directors got the lion’s share of credit for being the guiding force behind the overall craft and artistry of their films. They worked within the “system,” but were able to carve out distinct artistic personalities within that industrialized world. Clearly, directors somehow imprinted themselves on their films, a fact everyone knew without needing a theory to tell them so.

But such an understanding of theory—one held perhaps even today by most everyday moviegoers—misses the point as formulated by the *Cahiers* critics and their followers. The auteur theory always was a bit more recondite, a bit less straightforward, a game played by insiders; it always tended to be reduced and simplified by those who didn't quite understand it.

While the young *Cahiers* critics were far from systematic in their polemical articles and reviews, nevertheless in their fast formulations, in their enthusiasms and denunciations, they began to limn a definition of film authorship that depended on the capacity of the *viewer* to identify cinematic values and true cinematic authorship.

It was only trained viewers who fully understood cinematic values that were directly opposed to the unconsidered system of antiquated literary values that had been falsely lacquered onto the cinema. The young François Truffaut, for example, in his bromide "A Certain Tendency of the French Cinema," published in *Cahiers du cinéma* in 1954, attacked what he called the "Tradition of Quality" in French movies, which included polished photography that "under the cover of literature" provided bourgeois pleasures to a stupefied audience; there could not be, in Truffaut's view, peaceful co-existence between the bourgeois literary cinema and an auteur's cinema that had nothing to do with literary values.

Nowhere was the battle for an auteur's cinema waged more fiercely than in the critical consideration of the American commercial cinema. While European directors during this period were more easily granted the privileged status of major artists—a trend that extended to great directors in the 1950s like Ingmar Bergman from Sweden and Federico Fellini from Italy—directors working in the entertainment-driven American system, like Hawks, George Cukor, Douglas Sirk, Frank Tashlin, and Alfred Hitchcock, were seldom given such privileged status; they were still considered craftsmen who contributed their skills to make the products of the system. It was the job of the auteur theory to rescue them, on the one hand, from the tyrannical false values of literary quality; and, on the other hand, to elevate their heretofore submerged status in the system. The theory required the film critic to identify the particular cinematic qualities—the stylistic gestures, the inner visual structures—of the often underappreciated work of these commercial directors, so as to grant to them, as they worked within the confines of the industrial system, the status of authorship they deserved.

It was exactly this tension—between the confines of the studio system and the need of a director's cinematic personality to somehow express itself within that system of constraint—that provided the aesthetic interest of many of the films that auteur critics championed.

Thus, an auteur's cinema became, in effect, a film critic's cinema, for only the trained critic could point out the nature of a given director's specific cinematic personality within the system. Since many viewers presumed that American films had little to do with art, auteur critics took it upon themselves to rectify this mistaken presumption, and offered to show the often complex nature of a director's hidden artistry when and where it existed.

Foremost among these critics was the American Andrew Sarris, whose article "Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962" helped to systematize the major premises behind the

theory and to explain some of its quirks and tenets. Sarris made it clear that the theory did not predict success or failure, as good directors could make bad films and vice versa. The implicit assumption behind the theory was made clear: not all directors were auteurs. Directors were not always consistent—even auteurs could fail—but cinematic meaning was always more likely to be imbued in a film made by an auteur. While anyone with a talented crew of technicians could make a film, perhaps even an enjoyable film—witness the number of successful films made by actors turned one-time directors—only an auteur demonstrated, in film after film, consummate technical mastery. And this was Sarris's first premise of the theory: supreme technical competence of the director as a criterion of value.

The second premise was the director's distinguishable personality as a mark of a film's value. Directors could move up or down a scale of aesthetic value based on certain recurring characteristics of style that could come to be seen as signatures of a director's identity. Billy Wilder, for example, a very successful commercial writer/director, never fit in the auteur critics' pantheon because his films did not demonstrate stylistic development and consistency. Other directors, however, whose work demonstrated such consistency even in the face of other severe artistic problems, were accorded high honors: Orson Welles, for instance, never lost rank with auteur critics even as his films became increasingly shoddy; and Otto Preminger in Sarris's economy of value proved his worth by indicating a consistent visual personality even when he tackled thematically diverse projects.

If Sarris's first premise emphasized a director's technical mastery, and his second a director's stylistic consistency, evolution, and personality, the third premise was related to what he regarded to be the holy of holies of cinematic art: interior meaning.

Interior meaning was precisely the place where the director's artistic personality was in tension with the material. Uncovering internal meaning was the ultimate joy of the auteur critic, and it took years of close observation of a director's work to uncover it. Even Sarris admitted such meaning could almost seem mystical to the acolyte: and thus the theory was always in flux: directors rose and fell in value as their inner meaning became apparent. Inner meaning required a kind of decryption that separated out the distracting contributions of producers and cameramen and actors: eventually, over time, after the critic sifted through the evidence of film after film, the auteur's inner meaning emerged.

Thus, Howard Hawks, far from being a mere craftsman of a variety of Hollywood genre pictures, becomes a premier test case of the theory: from war films to gangster films, from musicals to comedies, from westerns to melodramas, Hawks codes again and again for the watchful critic the same motifs and themes, the same visual styles, the same tempos of movement, the same paradigms of relationship, now between men and women, now between men and men. Seen in toto, his films call out to the critic to lift him up not just as a Hollywood craftsman but as a supreme author, embodying a career project that consciously or unconsciously saturates his filmography. Style is not contingent to the accident of the selections of each film; it is the essence of each film's significance. One can watch a Hawks film and only see its artifice and genre manipulation (*Monkey Business* [1952]), or its relative success (*The Big Sleep*

[1946]) or its failure (*Hatari* [1962]); but the auteur critic sees codes of expressiveness that can be read backwards and forwards through the filmmaker's oeuvre. The flirtatious bickering of John Wayne and Walter Brennan in *Rio Bravo* (1959) overlaps the flirtatious bickering of Cary Grant and Rosalind Russell in *His Girl Friday* (1940), and both inform the same pattern one can see in the exchanges between John Barrymore and Carole Lombard in *Twentieth Century* (1933).

But Hawks is far from the only case. Raoul Walsh, Samuel Fuller, Nicholas Ray—they and many others, from the auteur critic's point of view, are auteurs because they find a way to lace their diverse films with the imprint of personality in spite (and even because) of the scripts, genres, bad actors, and budgets under which they are constrained to work, and the audiences to whom they are forced to pander. The process of finding the author's hidden meaning isn't programmatic, or schematic: it is a matter of decipherment, of discovery, of finding the hidden pressure points that even the auteur in question may not be aware are coded in film after film; it is a process of imbuing these pressure points with levels of meaning that can only be called personal, unique, and inextinguishable.

To those who became the theory's converts and proponents, the concept was revelatory; to those who resisted it, the theory was misguided. Indeed, by the middle 1960s, particularly in American film criticism, auteur theory had become the staging ground for discussions on the very nature of cinema aesthetics. For over two decades it was a critical touchstone, complete with its attendant acolytes, defenders, explainers, refiners, and (of course) bitter opponents.

Among the opponents were critics like Stanley Kauffmann, who resisted the notion that a film's value was primarily connected to the filmmaker's ability to use a camera consistently, or to exploit film's inherent mythology, or to pursue "unconscious" themes while in the service of "fourth rate melodrama" (1971, 96). Kauffmann also suggested that the idea was being picked up by filmmakers themselves, who were using it to justify working with material that was otherwise beneath their, and our, intellectual interest. Instead of merely serving critics who deciphered the hidden meaning of the works of the past, the theory was providing young filmmakers with the justification to assert their value as directors by placing self-referential signs in their films that showed they relished "the exaltation of pop over pompous 'elitist' art" (1971, 256). In other words, the theory had become, for those who resisted it, an excuse used by talented fetishists to justify the recycling of forms from the past rather than pursuing new territories of art. Read forwards, auteur theory seems to make possible not only Martin Scorsese but Quentin Tarantino, two directors prepared from their first work consciously to demonstrate stylistic mastery and consistency, and to place references that can be "read backwards" throughout their films (and film history). Kauffmann's intuition was prescient: a theory of critical decipherment became a clue for how a filmmaker could fashion an artistic personality even before the filmmaker began making films.

Oddly enough, in the light of burgeoning developments in postmodern thinking at the end of the twentieth century, auteur theory may seem a relic of a bygone era. From the earliest French *Cahiers* critics, auteur theory appeared to be an attempt to prop up the critical value of certain directors; and it raised the figure of the director to the

same cultural level occupied by literary authors. But this attempt, successful insofar as film directors became significant world figures in the 1960s and '70s, seemed to run diametrically opposed to concurrent tendencies in literary theory where the author was losing prestige. Roland Barthes's claim that the author was dead as a determiner of literary meaning, for example, enhanced the trend to deconstruct the way authors signify the meanings of texts; and Michel Foucault's recognition that authors in the hum of a postmodern infotainment society exist only insofar as society needs "author functions"—a means to distinguish one text from the next primarily for purposes of ownership—seemed to suggest that the concept of the author was a hoax of capitalism.

Would it be possible, if one, say, watched every film Quentin Tarantino has seen, and memorized every frame of every film Tarantino has directed, to identify the "anonymous" television commercials he is reported to have been paid millions to direct in Japan? Would such an identification uncover the "inner meanings" posited by auteur theory? Would finding "deep meaning" prove that cinematic authorship illuminates itself regardless of the genre or the purpose of the project? Or would this effort, rather, underscore the hollowness of auteur theory? Would it show that the signs of authorship alone have never determined the value of a text, but are only one aspect among many that help a reader, a viewer, an audience, a culture, or an epoch negotiate the indeterminate value of the artist's gesture to produce a provisional defense against the abyss?

See also: French New Wave; Intellectual Montage; Italian Neorealism; Sarris, Andrew

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—Robert Cowgill

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BIBLICAL EPIC, THE. The biblical epic has been an immensely popular genre of cinema that illuminates many aspects of American religious culture. Although the term actually includes three distinctly different subtypes—the Old Testament epic, the Jesus film, and epics about the clash between Rome and the early Church (e.g., *Ben-Hur*)—they all raise similar artistic and cultural questions: How to depict familiar stories that millions of people regard as uniquely sacred, yet make them fresh and exciting enough to be profitable in a global market? How to balance the need to treat the stories reverently, yet accommodate the unique interpretative slant of individual filmmakers and the aesthetic tastes of modern consumers of film? How to stay sufficiently faithful to the original biblical texts, yet make the films relevant to contemporary political and social concerns? Filmmakers face daunting challenges in translating biblical material to the silver screen.

Many of Hollywood's greatest directors, including Cecil B. DeMille, D. W. Griffith, William Wyler, George Stevens, Sidney Olcott, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Franco Zeffirelli, and Martin Scorsese, have accepted the challenge, creating some of the most profitable, influential, and controversial movies in history. Cinematic renditions of the Jesus story include one of the first epics (*Intolerance*); two of the most profitable films ever produced (the 1925 and 1959 versions of *Ben-Hur*); the first movie made in CinemaScope (*The Robe*); one of the most expensive films ever shot in America (*The Greatest Story Ever Told*); and one of the most controversial (*The Last Temptation of Christ*).

Both the potential for profit and the unique challenges inherent in the genre became apparent very early. In 1898, just a few years after the invention of motion pictures, a New York theatre produced a 19-minute film entitled *The Mystery of the Passion Play of Oberammergau*. Although billed as an authentic version of the famous German Passion Play, it was actually filmed on the roof of the Grand Central Plaza Hotel in Manhattan, a fact that did not dampen audience enthusiasm for the twice-daily showings. Consisting of 23 scenes from the life of Jesus, from Bethlehem to the Ascension, and script cards that were taken verbatim from the Gospels, every effort was made to make the presentation acceptable to Christians. The theatre accompanied the showings



Charlton Heston, playing Moses, stands in a barren landscape in a scene from the biblical epic *The Ten Commandments*, directed by Cecil B. DeMille, 1954. (Ralph Crane/Time Life Pictures/Getty Images)

with a boys' choir and lectures by a minister. Both Protestant and Catholic leaders gave their stamp of approval, and soon it was being distributed throughout the United States, not only by theatre owners but also by some itinerant Protestant evangelists who integrated the movie into their tent revival meetings (Tatum, 2004).

Indeed, some religious leaders felt that such a film belonged *only* inside a church, as film mogul Adolph Zukor discovered in 1908 when he brought to his U.S. theatres *The Passion Play*, produced by the French Company Pathé. After a showing of the movie, one angered Catholic priest informed Zukor that he intended to ask local authorities to close down the theatre for sacrilege. Although the priest had enjoyed the film very much, he believed that such a sacred topic should be presented only within a sacred space, never within the profane confines of a theatre (Keyser, 1984).

Sidney Olcott directed *From the Manger to the Cross* for Kalem in 1912, on location in Egypt and Palestine. The script was written by actress Gene Gauntier, who also played the role of the Virgin Mary. By now aware of the potential controversy

surrounding any cinematic representations of Christ, Kalem wisely arranged to give ministers and priests advance showings of the 71-minute movie, the most elaborate Jesus film made up to that date. A telling review in *Moving Picture World* offered many suggestions to distributors for how to “reverently” air the movie: use organ music and a little incense in the exhibition room, invite church members with written invitations (gothic type), and advertise with billboards rather than sandwich boards (Tatum, 2004).

D. W. Griffith, who directed the first truly epic Jesus movie, *Intolerance* (1916), demonstrated no such concern with church support. Griffith’s three-hour-long film, released the year after his groundbreaking *The Birth of a Nation*, tells four stories from different historical epochs, using the image of a mother rocking a cradle as the transition from one tale to the next. Griffith developed three stories in detail: the fall of Babylon to the Persians in 539 BCE, the 1572 St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre of French Huguenots by Catholics, and a contemporary story of an innocent American youth sentenced for murder. He also used brief scenes from the life of Christ—seven altogether, taking up just over 12 minutes of film—as thematic commentary to drive home his point: the same intolerance that had led to the death of Jesus had caused atrocities throughout history and was still alive in the United States. Griffith’s story cards left viewers with no doubt whom he was attacking: modern Progressive “uplifters” who sought to impose their own moral standards upon the nation (Solomon, 2001; Tatum, 2004).

Griffith no doubt had in mind the sort of thinking that in 1916 led both the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church to support film censorship. Yet he himself sought advice from Rabbi Isadore Myers in making his film, and prior to its release Griffith removed a scene showing the crucifixion of Jesus at the request of the Jewish organization B’nai B’rith, which feared that it might trigger anti-Semitic attacks on Jews as “Christ-killers” (Tatum, 2004). This concern would surface again repeatedly throughout the history of Jesus movies, most notably in the case of Norman Jewison’s *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1973) and Mel Gibson’s *The Passion of the Christ* (2004).

Griffith’s film was the first to use a biblical story deliberately to comment on contemporary social issues. Many future directors would follow his lead, especially in the heyday of the Old Testament Epics in the 1950s. Perhaps most importantly, the grand scale of Griffith’s sets and the drama of his presentation became the standard for other directors who ventured into the genre.

No filmmaker is more closely associated with the biblical epic than Cecil B. DeMille, whose more than 70 feature films included two versions of *The Ten Commandments* (1923 and 1956), *The King of Kings* (1927), *The Sign of the Cross* (1932), and *Samson and Delilah* (1949). DeMille’s Bible epics reveal a complex blend of his deep personal religious faith, strong patriotism, and uncanny sense of showmanship and marketing savvy. He spent countless hours researching the details of ancient art, clothing, and architecture in an effort to make his monumental sets as authentic as possible, yet freely took artistic license with the biblical texts and fabricated many plot elements out of pure imagination (Solomon, 2001).

In an effort to make *The King of Kings* as reverential as possible, DeMille sought the advice of Bruce Barton, author of the best-selling Jesus book *The Man Nobody Knows*

(1924), as well as Reverend George Reid Andrews of the Federal Council of Churches and Father Daniel A. Lord, S.J., of St Louis University. Shooting of the movie opened with a prayer service involving every member of the production, and Father Lord said mass daily on the set while filming on location. DeMille required all cast members to sign contracts mandating exemplary moral behavior off the set, and H. B. Warner, cast in the role of Jesus, rode from his dressing room to the set in a special closed car. While Warner was dressed as Jesus, only DeMille was allowed to speak to him (Stern, Jefford, and DeBona, 1999; Tatum, 2004).

Yet DeMille began his spectacle with a wholly nonbiblical scene of a wild banquet at the emperor's palace, where a scantily clad Mary Magdalene (Ziegfeld Follies girl Jacqueline Logan) reclines on a couch and lovingly embraces a pet leopard. This opening anticipated other highly eroticized scenes in DeMille's *Samson and Delilah* (Hedy Lamarr as the bewitching Delilah) and *The Ten Commandments* (1956), in which Anne Baxter plays the teasing Princess Nefretiri, barely able to restrain her lust for Moses (Charlton Heston). Of all American films produced during the Production Code era, few if any surpassed the biblical epics in raw eroticism. DeMille offered a theological response to critics who regarded his Bible movies as too sexual, arguing that by shrouding them "in what we think is reverence . . . we have too often stripped the men and women of the Bible of their humanity," a process that also stripped them of their religious value. The scanty clothing and scenes of illicit desire could be justified by the ancient settings and the need to visually portray moral temptation, but filmmakers could hardly be unaware of the added market appeal of such scenes (Babington and Evans, 1993; Smith, 2001; Solomon, 2001).

Biblical epics dominated the industry during the 1950s, the genre accounting for three of the four most profitable movies of the decade. Facing tough competition from television, Hollywood studios found Bible spectacles a reliable way to bring masses of Americans out to the theatre. DeMille's *Samson and Delilah* opened in late 1949, and became the number one box-office film of 1950. This was followed by *David and Bathsheba* (1949), *Quo Vadis* (1952), *Androcles and the Lion* (1952), *The Robe* (1953), *Salome* (1953), *Demetrius and the Gladiators* (1954), *The Prodigal* (1955), *The Silver Chalice* (1955), *The Ten Commandments* (1956), *The Big Fisherman* (1959), *Solomon and Sheba* (1959), *Ben-Hur* (1959), and *The Story of Ruth* (1960).

The immense popularity of the biblical epic in part reflected pervasive Cold War fears. Tales of ancient Jewish and Christian heroes made an ideal vehicle for addressing the conflict with America's enemies. In the Bible films, the foes of Israel and the Church are depicted always as militaristic dictatorships, while the Israelites and Christians are champions of human freedom. This motif, which runs through all the epics of the era, is made very explicit by DeMille in *The Ten Commandments*, which famously begins with DeMille himself appearing on-screen to talk with the audience about the eternal war between good and evil. The story of Moses and the giving of the Law at Sinai, DeMille claimed, are about the birth of liberty. "Are men the property of the state or are they free souls under God?" DeMille asked viewers. "This same battle continues throughout the world today" (Pratt and Reynolds, 1989; Nadel, 1993; Smith, 2001)

The Old Testament epics of the 1950s also reflected the ecumenical impulse of the period. During the decade, political and religious leaders frequently collapsed Judaism and Christianity together rhetorically into a common “Judeo-Christian tradition” that stood over and against humanism and paganism. Will Herberg, a Jewish sociologist, published a best-selling book in 1955 entitled *Protestant-Catholic-Jew*, in which he asserted that American Jews and the two major streams of American Christianity constituted diverse but essentially similar expressions of a common religious faith that could be summarized as the American Way of Life. In such a context, Hollywood Bible spectacles fused Old Testament and New Testament together with American nationalism to create dramatic morality tales about the eternal war between liberty and despotism. The audiences who flocked to watch these films left theatres with no doubt that the stories in their Bibles and the headlines in their daily newspapers both pointed to the same truths (Pratt and Reynolds, 1989; Babington and Evans, 1993; Mart, 2004).

The Old Testament epic went into decline during the 1960s, just as Jesus films made a resurgence. DeMille’s *The King of Kings* (1927) had remained so popular that until the great director died in 1959, nobody else in Hollywood attempted to make another cinematic portrayal of the Christ. Beginning with Nicholas Ray’s *King of Kings* (1961), there followed *Barabbas* (1962), Pasolini’s *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (1964), George Stevens’s *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (1965), *Godspell* (1973), *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1973), *Jesus of Nazareth* (1977), *Jesus* (1979), *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988), and *The Passion of the Christ* (2004).

Many of these films stirred considerable controversy. The liberalization and final abandonment of the Production Code allowed directors a much greater range of interpretative freedom, permitting them to take greater liberties with the biblical stories and to explore provocative theological questions. Ray, who had directed James Dean in *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955) before taking up the Jesus story, chose the youthful Jeffrey Hunter for the role of Christ, earning the film the nickname “I Was a Teenage Jesus.” *King of Kings* downplays the divinity of Jesus and presents him as something of a disaffected ascetic and teacher who called on people to question existing social norms (Stern, Jefford, and DeBona, 1999; Tatum, 2004).

Pasolini, an atheist and socialist, presented Jesus as a peasant rebel who challenged the political and religious authorities of his age. His *Gospel According to St. Matthew*, filmed in black and white, relied on unknown actors and eschewed dramatic sets. Aesthetically alien to Hollywood, it appeared in the United States at a time when many Americans had grown more accustomed to European imports. Even so, it failed to impress general audiences. A popular art film of the 1960s, *Gospel According to St. Matthew* earned the praise of many liberal theologians with its activist Jesus, but had virtually no impact on popular culture (Stern, Jefford, and DeBona, 1999; Tatum, 2004).

George Stevens, in contrast, worked in the tradition of Hollywood spectacles. *The Greatest Story Ever Told* utilized famous stars, large sets, and exotic locales, but, strangely, provided almost no drama. Stevens began and ended his film with the same scene—a *christus* figure painted on the ceiling of a cathedral. The audience immediately knows that this is the familiar story of the Christ of faith, the Jesus revered throughout the ages in countless Christian churches. His Jesus (Max von Sydow) is

drawn largely from the high Christology of John's gospel, a being so divine that his humanity barely shines through. Unlike Pasolini's Christ, there is no political or social radical in Stevens's version. *The Greatest Story Ever Told* reverently but predictably gives the audience the savior they already know (Stern, Jefford, and DeBona, 1999; Babington and Evans, 2001; Tatum, 2004).

Godspell and *Jesus Christ Superstar*, both rock operas originally produced for the stage, sought to breathe fresh life into the Jesus story, in the process shocking many religious conservatives with their portrayals of a countercultural messiah. By the 1970s, the counterculture was entering American popular culture. A fragmented society, torn by the civil rights revolution, assassinations, Vietnam, and Watergate, was willing to question traditional sources of authority. Movies like *Little Big Man* (1970) questioned the myth of the West, and *M*A*S*H* (1970) the American military. *The Graduate* (1967) challenged middle-class notions of marriage and material success. The time was ripe for questioning the Church and traditional constructions of Jesus. In American seminaries of the time, students debated the death of God and probed a host of new liberation theologies. On the religious right, many youth embraced a more traditional understanding of Jesus as savior, but one who also called on his followers to live a radically countercultural lifestyle that resembled that of the hippies. These "Jesus freaks" could find in *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Godspell* a figure who spoke to their deepest concerns (Stern, Jefford, and DeBona, 1999; Solomon, 2001; Tatum, 2004).

The Jesus of *Godspell* is a socially hip preacher of peace, condemned to die by the hypocritical establishment. Rather than proclaiming himself, Jesus enacts parables about the Kingdom of God for his disciples, who like him have dropped out of society and embraced a countercultural existence. Set in modern Manhattan instead of ancient Palestine, Jesus appears literally as a clown, is baptized in a water fountain, and crucified on a chain link fence. His death is not presented as an atoning sacrifice, but rather seems simply to underscore the brutality of the established political and social order. The Jesus of *Superstar*, also an antiestablishment figure, is very much a man, unsure of his own identity, who is elevated by his followers to superstardom. In a sense, the focus of *Jesus Christ Superstar* is less on Jesus himself than on his followers Judas Iscariot and Mary Magdalene. In one famous scene, Mary puts the exhausted Jesus to bed, and then sings her hit song "I Don't Know How to Love Him," confessing to the audience her sexual desire for the Messiah. Perhaps no other scene in the film underscores so clearly the cultural shift that had occurred since DeMille's era (Stern, Jefford, and DeBona, 1999).

Franco Zeffirelli, a Roman Catholic, found all of the existing cinematic representations of Christ to be inadequate, or in the case of *Godspell* and *Superstar* blasphemous. His *Jesus of Nazareth* was originally made as a miniseries for Italian and British TV. Drawing on an all-star cast and huge budget, he attempted to reconstruct in detail the look and feel of first-century Palestine and to present the divine-human Jesus Christ of Catholic dogma as a figure who was fully Jewish. More than any other cinematic portrayal of the Jesus story, Zeffirelli stresses the Jewish cultural milieu and Christ's complete identification with his people. The six-hour movie first aired in the United States on NBC on Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday, April 3 and 10, 1977,

and was watched by more than 90 million viewers. With warm support from Pope Paul VI, who hailed the film as a model of Christian art, *Jesus of Nazareth* remained a staple of American television at Easter throughout the following decade, and is still perhaps the most popular of all Jesus movies among Christians (Tatum, 2004).

Unlike Zeffirelli, who based his film on the Bible and Catholic dogma, Martin Scorsese turned to extra-biblical sources for *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988), an adaptation of the controversial novel by excommunicated Greek novelist Nikos Kazantzakis. Although Scorsese, a lapsed Catholic, clearly intended the film to be a reverential portrayal of Jesus, he sparked international opposition from conservative Catholics and Protestants alike (Mitchell and Plate, 2007). He opens the movie with a disclaimer that the film is based on a novel rather than the Bible, and that his theme is the struggle between body and spirit. His Jesus (Willem Dafoe) is unsure of his own identity and only gradually comes to understand his mission as savior. Most shockingly, he clearly has physical desire for Mary Magdalene. Much of the public furor focused on a dream sequence in which the crucified Jesus is given a vision of what his future life could be like as a married man if he should choose not to fulfill his role as sacrificial mediator. The audience sees him, from a distance, making love with his wife and playing with his children. When Jesus suddenly realizes that this vision comes from Satan, he commits himself to his destiny as the savior and revives on the cross, where he utters the final words of the film, "It is accomplished."

Although some liberal theologians warmly praised Scorsese for raising the issue of Jesus's humanity and sexuality, other liberals felt that he had taken too literal an approach to the Jesus story. After months of prerelease protests, the film had not been as cutting-edge as they anticipated. Conservative commentators, on the other hand, universally criticized the film for theological deficiencies (especially the lack of a resurrection) and found the treatment of Jesus' sexuality to be morally offensive (Tatum, 2004).

Conservative Christians were far happier with Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* (2004), a film that depicts the last 12 hours of Christ's life in such graphic detail that it received an R-rating for violence. Gibson, a Catholic who criticized Scorsese's account of Christ, based his version on elements from all four canonical passion narratives, as well as the mystical visions of Anne Catherine Emmerich (1774–1824), a German nun whose religious experiences were published in 1833 under the title *The Dolorous Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ*. Emmerich described her visions of Jesus's death in gory detail, adding to the bare bones of the Gospels intricate descriptions of torture and suffering. Emmerich also stressed the influence of demons on those who killed Jesus, including the Jews collectively. By choosing to incorporate Emmerich's writings into his script, Gibson opened himself to charges of anti-Semitism, a concern that has surfaced in all cinematic depictions of the crucifixion, but that especially dominated public discussion on *The Passion of the Christ* (Tatum, 2004; Malone, 2007).

Like DeMille, Gibson attempted to infuse the production of his film with religious devotion. A priest was on the set to say daily Latin Mass and also to hear confessions. Gibson's Jesus (Jim Caviezel) was a devout Catholic who prayed the rosary to help him endure his 15 days of recreated torture on the cross, and who understood himself as a vessel of the Holy Spirit. Gibson and Caviezel both expressed their hope that

viewers would be brought to repentance and conversion by watching the movie (Malone, 2007).

Although even many conservative viewers found the depictions of torture difficult to watch, Catholics and evangelical Protestant audiences generally praised Gibson for his emphasis on the cross as an atoning sacrifice. Liberal Christians, in contrast, often shared Jewish concerns that the film was anti-Semitic, and generally agreed that Gibson had so focused upon the passion of Jesus that he ignored many other Christological issues that are theologically central to the Gospels.

See also: DeMille, Cecil B.; Religion and Censorship in Film; Religion and Nationalism in Film

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—James Rohrer

BLACKFACE. The image is jarring to present-day viewers: white actors performing with faces colored black. Nonetheless, "blacking up"—applying burnt cork to white (and later black) skin—distinguishes the groundbreaking films of the early twentieth century. The striking prominence of blackface, however, reflects continuity with an earlier era and alludes to the ever-complicated relationship between race and entertainment in American history.

The long and complex history of blackface predates film; its cinematic presence is testimony only to the transition from the nineteenth century's dominant cultural form to that of the twentieth century, from theater to film. Although its roots stretch back at least to Elizabethan England and wind their way through colonial America, blackface first surged into popular culture during the 1830s and 1840s. Such entertainers as Thomas D. "Daddy" Rice and Stephen Foster cultivated a mass audience for the blackface minstrel show, a distinctly American form of stage entertainment that combined dancing, singing, and comedy routines performed by blackface entertainers. Appealing mostly to northern, urban, working-class men and claiming to speak as black men, the blackface minstrels built the first form of mass entertainment in American history.

That blackface and the minstrel shows were racist is undeniable: they caricatured and stereotyped African Americans. They presumed to speak for a people that could not speak for itself and did so through exaggerated misrepresentations and often mocking derision. Yet the minstrels could also identify with American blacks. While the legacy of blackface would come to be associated with indignity and humiliation, the minstrel show was more complicated than simple bigotry. It could evince sympathy as well as ridicule, and sometimes both at once. It represented love *and* theft, affection *and* disrespect, identification *and* distance. For the first time, black culture—however distorted—met mass culture. By the 1860s, blacks themselves were performing in blackface in front of white audiences, although they were limited to the same roles that white minstrels had created.

As the nineteenth century neared its end, blackface maintained its hold. The minstrel show gradually receded in popularity, but its successors—vaudeville and Tin Pan Alley—incorporated blackface into their acts. The most famous entertainers of the early twentieth century, including Al Jolson, George Burns, and Eddie Cantor, regularly performed in blackface. Blackface infiltrated whatever new forms of mass entertainment emerged, and film was not immune.

At the time of its release, Edwin S. Porter's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1903) was the most expensive and sophisticated film ever produced. Based on Harriet Beecher Stowe's famed abolitionist novel but owing more to its numerous theatrical reproductions, this was the first film to feature a substantial black character—a white man in blackface, reenacting stereotypes pioneered decades earlier. Films of the time were rooted in the stage, in the minstrelsy-vaudeville tradition, and in blackface. D. W. Griffith's ode to the Ku Klux Klan, *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), wedded technical and artistic innovation with virulent racism and became a sensation. The film relied on whites in blackface to portray the depraved black rapist; the conniving, mixed-race seductress; and the unruly black mob. Griffith's masterpiece redefined filmmaking but also demonstrated blackface's potential to demonize African Americans. *Birth* polarized many people, some of whom raised a great hue and cry against its insidious content and, ultimately, against the very practice of blackface, which began to fade as black performers gradually assumed dramatic roles. A decade later, Al Jolson's performance in *The Jazz Singer* (1927) would signal that decline. The most famous entertainer of his day, Jolson, who frequently performed in blackface, played the son of an orthodox Jew eager to make it big as a jazz singer. His climactic rendition of "Mammy" in blackface

wows the crowd. Yet the film's use of blackface is not reflexive or unconscious. The audience witnesses Jolson blacking up, sees him don his nappy wig and deliver the stereotypical blackface grin. Blackface had become conspicuous.

In the following decades, blackface faded from film, lingering mostly in musicals and comedies before disappearing almost entirely. As the spirit of the civil rights movement wrought a dramatic shift in public sensibilities, popular culture could no longer tolerate such egregious stereotypes. Blacks began to assume ever more prominent roles, roles less and less dictated by the caricatures drawn by early blackface performers. Blackface exists now mostly in memory and the occasional satire. Nevertheless, its awkward legacy reminds us of the centrality of race in U.S. history and hints at the continuing complexity of American race relations.

See also: African Americans in Film; Ethnic and Immigrant Culture in Film

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—Joseph Locke

CANNES FILM FESTIVAL, THE. Every spring amidst the blooming foliage and golden beaches of the French Riviera, filmmakers, actors, and film industry insiders gather in the seaside city of Cannes for the annual Cannes Film Festival. Beginning in the late 1930s and continuing into the twenty-first century, the Cannes Film Festival is one of the most influential events in the world of international cinema. More than just an artistic showcase, the festival is an arena for fostering international cooperation as well as a venue where multimillion-dollar deals are brokered and the careers of up-and-coming artists are made.

Situated on the Mediterranean, the city of Cannes has a long history as an international gathering place. During the nineteenth century, it became a renowned holiday destination for English aristocrats seeking respite from their country's unpleasant spring weather. Due to this influx of elite visitors, five-star hotels, luxury villas, and health spas sprung up around the city. Cannes's thriving economy and Mediterranean location made it the perfect location for an international film festival whose organizers were seeking to encourage global cooperation in response to the growing threat of fascism. As a result of the efforts of French Minister of National Education Jean Zay, and the support of France's British and American allies, the first Cannes Film Festival, or *Le Festival International de Cannes*, opened in September 1939, with film pioneer Louis Lumière serving as its president. Although the cinematic festivities at Cannes were suspended during World War II, organizers relaunched the festival in 1946. Significantly, its focus on international cooperation was expressed even more powerfully after the war. As the first major European postwar cultural event, the festival aimed to rebuild international relations through what Italian director Roberto Rossellini called the "international language of film."

Despite the postwar reality of bilateral politics, the festival welcomed submissions from all over the globe. Not surprisingly, filmmakers from France, Italy, and the United States submitted their work for consideration at Cannes; but festival organizers, determined to insure that Cannes was truly a celebration of world cinema, also sought submissions from filmmakers in countries such as Mexico, India, Japan and Egypt. During the 1950s, the festival established its most prestigious prize, the Palme d'Or

or Golden Palm. Awarded each year to the submission deemed by organizers as the festival's "best film," the Palme d'Or became one of the cinematic community's most prestigious honors. In 1955, an American film, *Marty*, won the inaugural award; since then, 14 American films, including the work of directors such as Robert Altman, Francis Ford Coppola, and Martin Scorsese, have received the festival's top prize.

While early on Cannes tended to reward epics such as *Ben-Hur* (1959) and *Dr. Zhivago* (1965) with the festival's top prizes, it also began to embrace new, and for many, radical forms of filmmaking, such as Italian neorealism and French New Wave. Indeed, since the 1960s, the Palme d'Or has gone to a number of small, independent films, including American offerings such as *Sex, Lies and Videotape* (1989), *Barton Fink* (1991), and *Pulp Fiction* (1994). Festival organizers have also not shied away from honoring politically charged works. In 2004, for instance, Michael Moore's documentary *Fahrenheit 9/11*, which was sharply critical of what Moore argued was America's latter-day imperialism, took home the Palme d'Or.

In addition to being a showcase for both established and upcoming filmmakers, the festival is also a magnet for international paparazzi. While studio executives broker distribution deals in Cannes's beachfront cafes, everyone from pop stars, to porn stars, to cinematic unknowns court the hordes of photographers that follow the festival's events, hoping to gain their own proverbial "15 minutes of fame" in the ephemeral world of modern celebrity.

Although it began as a yearly event that sought to promote a global sense of cultural cooperation and respect, the Cannes Film Festival has evolved into a multimedia extravaganza for artists, celebrities, and opportunists. Still, what remains at the heart of this extraordinary celebratory gathering is a deep reverence for the art of filmmaking.

See also: Film Criticism; Independent Film, The

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—Amy M. Harris

CINÉMA VÉRITÉ. Cinéma vérité is a genre of documentary film marked by its aesthetic minimalism and attempts to achieve objectivity. The use of location shooting and handheld cameras, as well as eschewing nondiegetic elements, allowed its practitioners to make claims of achieving greater realism and, in some cases, objective truth. It is widely considered the artistic precursor of contemporary reality television.

There is still debate as to the origin of the cinéma vérité movement of the 1950s and 1960s; was it fueled by technology or ideology? Many filmmakers were quick to point



Scene from the 1969 documentary *Salesman*, directed by Albert and David Maysles, Shown is bible salesman Paul Brennan (aka “The Badger”). (Photofest)

out that they were merely continuing a tradition of mobile filmmaking that went back to the silent era. Civil War-era Soviet agit-trains were itinerant film studios that traveled to hotspots to document and politicize the military and proletariat. The term “cinéma vérité” is a translation of Dziga Vertov’s film series *Cinema-Truth*.

Ironically, it was said that this mobile, observational approach could counter claims that documentarians allowed themselves to become weapons or propaganda during World War II.

Others claim that the genre is the culmination of a technological revolution. By the late 1950s faster film stock, lighter cameras, and changes in sound technology allowed small, mobile film crews to create high-quality films. By the 1960s, these technological breakthroughs were widespread.

Documentarians who utilized these technologies were initially divided into camps separated by the Atlantic Ocean. Direct cinema, as it was referred to in North America, rejected narration and reenactment as signs of heavy-handed, propagandistic filmmaking. These filmmakers insisted they were able to capture objective, unfiltered experience with the new technology and approach and therefore mitigated ethical issues of the camera’s relationship to its subject. Robert Drew’s *Primary* (1960) followed the Wisconsin presidential primary between Hubert H. Humphrey and John F. Kennedy. Drew insisted that before long the subjects ignored the presence of the camera crew and acted in a free and genuine manner. Private moments, in effect, were made public.

Cinéma vérité, as it was known in Europe, made different claims to objectivity. Jean Rouch, whose training was in anthropology, and Edgar Morin, a sociologist, shot *Chronique d'un été* in 1960. The film begins with a debate between the two filmmakers as to whether anybody could truly be "themselves" with a camera present. While the filmmakers were generally hidden from the frame in direct cinema, Rouch and Morin are in the forefront of their cinematic experiment as they interview a cross-section of France. Topics from the mundane details of everyday life to larger philosophical and political issues are discussed. Toward the end of the film, they bring their subjects back before the camera and ask if they were accurately reflected in the film. The answers varied, and some vehemently denied that an accurate portrayal was achieved.

While Rouch and other practitioners of the European tradition of cinéma vérité likely thought they were capturing a strict truth, they did not maintain that the camera was easily ignored. To the contrary, Rouch said that it is the presence of the camera that allows truth to be captured at all.

Cinéma vérité/direct cinema continued to flourish throughout the 1960s. Albert and David Maysles's *Salesman* (1968) chronicled the plight of door-to-door Bible salesmen. Frederick Wiseman's *Titicut Follies* (1967) examines a Massachusetts mental institution. And D. A. Pennebaker shot a variety of films about pop culture icons, including *Don't Look Back* (1967), about Bob Dylan, and the concert film *Monterey Pop* (1968).

Inevitably, a backlash to cinéma vérité developed. While some filmmakers returned to the aesthetics that had been decried by the practitioners of the form, sometimes to new effect (like Errol Morris), others decided to stop attempting to capture objectivity and instead to concentrate on subjectivity. Ross McElwee, for instance, specializes in first-person films that make no claims to a truth beyond his own.

Although much of the ideological weight of cinéma vérité has disappeared, its aesthetics remain. Reality television shows, like *Big Brother*, *Survivor*, and *COPS*, have dominated the airwaves of the new millennium with their combination of inexpensive production and voyeuristic pleasure. Fiction films, such as *Blair Witch Project* (1999) and *Cloverfield* (2008), used techniques of cinéma vérité to create an engrossing first-person experience.

See also: Documentary, The

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—Alan C. Abbott

CINEMATOGRAPHY. “Cinematography” literally means “writing in movement,” and it relies heavily on photography, or “writing in light.” The way a film looks is due in large part to the work of its cinematographer, often called the director of photography (DP). The three main components of cinematography are the photographic elements, the framing of the image, and the duration of the image on screen. Cinematography has been greatly impacted by technological developments, such as digital video in the 1980s, and, more recently, high-definition digital video, which offers greater resolution than standard digital video.

The photographic elements of cinematography include the use of film stock, the speed of motion, and the perspectival relations among screen images. Film stock varies according to its size, its sensitivity to light (its speed), its level of contrast, and its graininess. It is known by its width, measured in millimeters; for example, 8 mm, Super 8 mm, 16 mm, 35 mm, and 70 mm. Home movies tend to be shot on 8 mm stock and professional films on 35 mm or 70 mm stock. Different brands of film (known by their manufacturer and a specific number) are chosen by a cinematographer for their unique qualities. Spike Lee’s DP, Malik Sayeed, used Kodak 5239, for example, a film stock developed by NASA for the Air Force, to give the 1995 film *Clockers* a distinctively raw look.

Issues related to film stock have been complicated by the introduction of digital technology. With celluloid film, the chemical properties of the emulsion and the sensitivity of the film to light determined its appearance. Now filmmakers who shoot on digital video do not use film stock, but can still alter the look of the image with editing programs. Joel and Ethan Coen, for instance, along with their DP Roger Deakins, washed out the colors in their 2000 film *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* to give it the look of 1930s postcards.

Early black-and-white films, such as Edwin S. Porter’s 1903 *The Great Train Robbery*, often added color by way of hand-tinting. This hand-tinted look was evoked in Steven Spielberg’s black-and-white film *Schindler’s List* (1993), although the startling splash of red that defines the coat of a little Jewish girl in the death camp—one of only four color images used in the film—was most likely achieved by way of a digital post-production process. Janusz Kaminski, Spielberg’s DP on the film, won an Academy Award for his cinematography.

Although the first Technicolor processes had been used extensively by the early 1930s, an advanced, three-strip Technicolor process was not introduced until 1932, when Walt Disney was convinced to use it to film one of his *Silly Symphony* cartoons, *Flowers and Trees*. The system split the film into three strips, one for each primary color, allowing screen images to appear in highly saturated, almost hyperreal hues. Surprisingly, given the demand in the United States for color films today, the production of a significant number of pictures made “in color” was slow in coming: only 1 percent of the films made in 1936 (admittedly during the Depression) were shot in color, although by 1967, that figure had reached 94 percent. As a result of this slow evolution toward the dominance of color films, between 1939 and 1966 the Academy gave Oscars for Best Cinematography in two separate categories: black-and-white and color. In 1936, 1937, and 1938, Special Awards were given to films made in color before the official category was inaugurated.

The choice of the lens used on the camera (based on focal length) also has an impact on the way the image looks, determining the perspectival relations among the objects in the frame. A wide-angle lens exaggerates depth, making the image appear to bulge at its edges. Using a telephoto lens condenses the depth of an image, making it appear that the planes are squashed together. This lens allows the magnification of action filmed at a distance and can make it appear to take longer for people or other objects in motion to arrive at a certain foregrounded point. An excellent example of this type of shot is found toward the end of the Mike Nichols's film *The Graduate*, when Benjamin is seen running toward the church where Elaine is being married (DP: Robert Surtees). A zoom lens allows for variation on these focal lengths, so that the images appear to move closer to or farther away from the viewer while the camera remains stationary.

During the 1930s, newer film stocks were developed that were more light-sensitive; this gave rise to new cinematographic techniques, such as deep focus. Gregg Toland, Academy Award-winning cinematographer of *Wuthering Heights* (1939), is credited with popularizing this technique. Deep focus brings greater depth to the image, allowing the viewer to see clearly multiple planes of action at once. Prior to this, actions were visible on one or two planes only, or "soft focus" was used to highlight a specific point of interest. The use of deep focus changed the entire look of film images. The technique is used with stunning effect throughout *Citizen Kane* (1941), which many consider the greatest film ever made, and on which Toland worked with director Orson Welles. Toland also used this technique when he shot *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1941) with director William Wyler. In each instance, deep-focus cinematography allows the viewer to make meaningful connections among actions occurring simultaneously in the foreground, midground, and background of the frame.

The framing of the filmed image produces a certain vantage point for the viewer. The size and shape of the frame can vary; standard aspect ratio (the dimension of the screen image) is 1.85:1, but the image can be made larger or smaller with special lenses, masking and matting, or newer digital techniques. Innovations such as the "iris shot," made popular by D. W. Griffith's cameraman Billy Bitzer in *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), directed the audience's attention to a certain spot by encircling a portion of the image and zooming the "iris" in or out on that image.

The angle, distance, or height of the image is determined by the setup and placement of the camera. Shots can be filmed straight-on, from low angles or high, framed level to the ground, or canted (tilted). The camera can be placed close to the action or farther away from it, resulting in images being projected across a spatial continuum that extends from the extreme close-up to the extreme long-shot.

The movement of the camera is also a component of cinematography. The panoramic, or "pan," moves the camera from side to side; the "tilt" moves the camera up and down; and in the "tracking" shot, or "dolly" shot, the camera moves as a whole relative to the action in the shot. Technological innovations such as the dolly and the crane (first developed in the 1930s), and later the Steadicam (introduced in 1976), gave the camera and the DP freedom of movement. The Steadicam is a harness that a cameraperson wears to prevent excessive shaking of the camera as he or she moves.

Busby Berkeley's musicals *42nd Street* (Lloyd Bacon, 1933) and *Gold Diggers of 1933* (Mervyn LeRoy, 1933) feature dramatic uses of the crane shot; and in *Gone with the Wind* (1939), Ernest Haller and Lee Garmes use a crane shot to capture the acres and acres of wounded men.

Another important element of cinematography is shot length, or the duration of the shot from start to cut (also known as a "take" on the film set). The length of the shot may simulate real time, extend it, or shorten it. Innovations in camera technology brought about the technique known as "mobile framing"; a moving camera brings visual interest to a long take (not to be confused with a long shot, which is a property of the camera lens). In his 1958 film *Touch of Evil*, for instance, Orson Welles and his DP Russell Metty heighten suspense in the opening scene by having the camera track a ticking bomb as it moves through town in the trunk of a car; the shot runs for just over three minutes without cutting. (In an homage to this iconic shot, director Robert Altman and his cinematographer Jean Lepine open *The Player* with a nearly eight-minute tracking shot, during which some of the characters discuss the Welles/Lepine shot!) Mobile framing, also known as the sequence shot, was used to great effect in the film *Russian Ark* (Aleksandr Sokurov, 2002); there, DP Tilman Büttner filmed the 96-minute picture in one continuous shot, moving his high-definition video camera slowly through the Hermitage Museum on a Steadicam. (Alfred Hitchcock had already experimented with this single-take technique as early as 1948, when he made *Rope*.)

Although rarely acknowledged by most viewers, it is impossible to overstate the importance of the cinematographer for the filmmaking process. Beyond those already mentioned, other notable American cinematographers include Haskell Wexler (*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, 1966; *Medium Cool*, 1969); Conrad L. Hall (*Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, 1969; *American Beauty*, 1999; *Road to Perdition*, 2002); and John Toll (*Legends of the Fall*, 1994; *Braveheart*, 1995; *The Thin Red Line*, 1998).

See also: Disney, Walt; Griffith, D. W.; Hitchcock, Alfred; New Technologies in Filmmaking; Welles, Orson

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—Jennifer L. Gauthier

COLOR. Although color films would not become the norm in Hollywood until the mid-1960s, the use of color in a variety of other forms can be traced to the infancy of American cinema. In fact, even 50 years before the advent of cinema, the projection of hand-painted images by proto-cinematic technology like the stereopticon, a projector of photographic slides, was a common practice.

Hand-painting, tinting, and toning were practices employed by early cinema, and used either to establish mood or to serve as attractions for their own sake. There were firms, the Kinemacolor Company being the most successful of these, that attempted to produce color films. Its additive color process, however, was beset with technical problems that would also prove challenging to other early attempts engaged with the additive process.

The Technicolor Corporation was formed in 1915, and a year later it developed its first color process, a two-color additive system that involved the use of red and green filters. In 1917, the company showcased this process in *The Gulf Between*, a film that was financed by Technicolor. It was Technicolor's invention of a subtractive process in the 1920s, however, that helped account for its hugely influential impact on Hollywood. Filmic demonstrations of this process included *The Toll of the Sea* (1922), featuring Technicolor's two-color subtractive process and use of a beam-splitting camera, and *The Vikings* (1927), which displayed the company's revised two-color process.

During the 1920s and '30s, color was primarily used to define fantasy sequences or artistic spectacles; color, for instance, was widely used in musicals. Technicolor sequences appeared in films such as *The Broadway Melody* (1929), *The Desert Song* (1929), and *Putting on the Ritz* (1930), while other pictures, such as *Gold Diggers of Broadway* (1929) and *The Melody Man* (1930), were shot entirely in Technicolor.

In 1932, Technicolor developed their three-color subtractive process that would be used until the early 1950s. This process recorded separate red, blue, and green images on different negatives and required special cameras, which Technicolor owned and would lease to Hollywood studios. Walt Disney was the first to use this process for his *Silly Symphonies* cartoon series. Its high costs prevented the process from being widely used, but three-color sequences can be found in *The Cat and the Fiddle* (1934), *Kid Millions* (1934), and *The House of Rothschild* (1934). In addition to the musical, other film genres, such as the adventure tale or the historical spectacle, made use of color during the 1930s. Independent film producer David O. Selznick made use of the constantly improving Technicolor process in a number of his films in the late 1930s, including *Gone with the Wind* (1939).

The introduction of Eastman Kodak's "Eastman Color" in the 1950s, a single-film color process that did not require a special camera, eventually led to the replacement of the Technicolor process; *Foxfire* (1954) was the last film to use Technicolor's three-strip camera. Along with other technological attractions such as wide-screen cinema, Hollywood used color in its films in order to draw audiences away from their televisions. Although only half of Hollywood films were in color in the 1950s, this would change dramatically in the 1960s, when television converted to color. By then, color had become more naturalized, both because it was now consistent with audience expectations and because Eastman Kodak had developed film stock that allowed for truer, more balanced hues. In the 1980s, industry pressure, especially from directors such as Martin Scorsese, would be brought to bear on Eastman Kodak to produce film stock whose color would not degrade. As Scorsese pointed out, this problem of fading color was particularly pronounced in films that were made during the three-decade period

between 1950 and 1980. Eastman Kodak responded by developing a low-fade film stock that guaranteed increased color stability.

See also: New Technologies in Filmmaking

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—Linda Mokdad

COMING-OF-AGE FILM, THE. The coming-of-age film is a narrative rite of passage, following the evolution of the main character or characters from childhood to adulthood. These films often focus on a centralized experience, such as sexual awakening or graduation, or on a period important to teenagers, such as summer vacation or senior prom. Significantly, coming-of-age films have shifted their focus as conceptions of adolescence in American culture have evolved.

Coming-of-age films tend toward two subtypes: dangerous teens and celebration of youth. In the first, coming of age is a perilous time, where teens are potentially victims of the forces of the adult world and their own changing needs and desires. These stories have an immediate precursor in the “fallen woman” tales of the late nineteenth century, and share with them the image of coming of age as falling from grace.

In the second type, coming of age is a glorious time, a period of idealism and hope, marked by drama, but a drama that is formative. These stories evolve from the *Bildungsroman*, stories about adversity and moral development with male protagonists who often rise from rags to riches through hard work. These stories often view the past idealistically, with a nostalgic conception of childhood.

By the mid-twentieth century, child labor legislation and public schools had extended the duration of childhood and created an entirely new cultural phenomenon: the teenager. Concurrently, films began to be made about this transitional time, centering on the lives of teenagers. Because the film industry was still restricted by the Hays Code, these pictures were often framed as moral cautionary tales, showing dangerous consequences for unrestricted teen behavior.

These initial coming-of-age films primarily fit the dangerous teen model. Starting in the late 1930s with pictures like *Boys' Reformatory* (1939), teenagers were depicted as societal threats. Films such as *Reefer Madness* (1936), *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), and *Blackboard Jungle* (1955) all highlighted the dangers of rebellious teenagers. In these



Poster for the 1955 coming-of-age film *Blackboard Jungle*, directed by Richard Brooks. (Redferns/Getty Images)

films, teenagers represent a dangerous undirected force in culture, disrupting society by falling victim to rebellious urges like drugs and violence. During this period, coming of age was also represented in “instructional films,” such as *Going Steady?* (1951) and *Social Sex Attitudes in Adolescence* (1953), that had a rather heavy-handed moral sensibility.

In the 1960s, adolescence became a hallmark of what might be understood as the “culture industry.” As baby boomers became teenagers, adolescents developed as a market and Hollywood began to craft films specifically for teenagers. The 1960s saw the birth of celebratory-development films, which maintained a moral distance from teenage delinquency. However, as the Hays Code lost power, the coming-of-age film developed greater nuance and explored different facets of the lives of young people.

Beach Party (1963), for example, one of the first major films celebrating adolescence, headed a series of films spotlighting summers on the beach free from adult supervision. *The Graduate* (1967) provided a different look at coming of age, introducing a distinct sexual component to the genre. The documentary *High School* (1968) provided a nonfiction examination of the coming-of-age process in America, examining a Philadelphia high school and its students.

During the 1970s and '80s, the coming-of-age film shifted significantly. A generation of directors and screenwriters created films dealing with their own childhood experiences, creating nostalgic, heavily regionalized explorations of lost cultures. As

part of this movement—especially with the end of Hays Code censorship—coming-of-age films featured increased sexual content, including films focusing explicitly on the sex lives of teenagers. Two seminal films of the genre made during this period were George Lucas's *American Graffiti* (1973) and Peter Bogdanovich's *The Last Picture Show* (1971), both of which explored vanishing ways of life and personal change as a manifestation of larger shifts in society. During the 1980s, films like *Porky's* (1981) and *Dirty Dancing* (1987) used sexual awakening as their central metaphor.

By the late 1980s and early 1990s, the coming-of-age film had developed as a major Hollywood genre. Writer-director John Hughes capitalized on the popularity of these films, making cult classics such as *Sixteen Candles* (1984), *The Breakfast Club* (1985), and *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, all of which focused on teenage angst and redemption. Ben Stiller's 1994 film *Reality Bites* dealt with the extended adolescence of Generation X, looking at the struggles of twenty-somethings trying hard to become adults. The theme of sexual awakening also continued in films from this period, prominently represented by the *American Pie* films (1999, 2001, and 2003).

Although the vast majority of coming-of-age films made during the 1980s and '90s concerned the activities of white teenagers and twenty-somethings, some, like Spike Lee's *School Daze* (1988) and Patricia Cardoso's *Real Women Have Curves* (2002), revolved around the experiences of young people of color.

Interestingly, several films from the 1990s used the dangerous teen model to critique teen sex comedies. Larry Clark's *Kids* (1995) exposed the licentious world of New York teenagers and HIV; Sam Mendes's *American Beauty* (1999) explored the sexualization of teenagers in American culture through the lens of adult-teen interactions; and Gus Van Sant's *My Own Private Idaho* (1991) invited audiences to take a journey of self-discovery from the perspective of two gay teenagers.

As the twenty-first century began, two subgenres of coming-of-age films began to appear. The first of these highlighted the experiences of unorthodox characters—"nerds"—who become unexpectedly popular within elite social circles; Wes Anderson's *Rushmore* (1998) and Jared Hess's *Napoleon Dynamite* (2004) are good examples. The second of these subgenres was the early twenty-first-century 1970s and '80s nostalgia film. Cameron Crowe's *Almost Famous* (2000), for example, gave expression to his own teenage experiences as a rock-and-roll reporter; while Greg Mottola's *Adventureland* (2009) explored frustration, love, and salvation in, of all places, an amusement park.

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—B. Grantham Aldred

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INFORMATION, THE. After the United States entered World War I in 1917, a number of government-backed films were produced that were closely linked to President Woodrow Wilson's effort to control the news concerning America's involvement in the military conflict. Wilson, hoping to gain a "consensus of support" for his decision to enter the war, had turned for advice to one of his most loyal supporters, George Creel. The 41-year-old Creel, a muckraking journalist of some stature, defined himself as "the original Wilson man." Indeed, as early as 1905, when Wilson was still president of Princeton University, Creel had encouraged him to run for the presidency of the United States; and, as a vital member of the 1916 campaign, Creel had worked hard to ensure that his candidate would be reelected to a second term in office, going so far as to write a pro-Wilson book entitled *Wilson and the Issues*.

Shortly after the United States declared war in 1917, Wilson, who had defeated the Republican candidate Charles E. Hughes by a relatively small margin in the 1916 election, summoned Creel to the White House in order to discuss how he might most effectively disseminate information concerning America's participation in the global struggle. Wilson and Creel were both well aware that Britain and France had instituted policies of "iron censorship" in regard to the release of news about their respective involvement in the war effort; and also that American admirals, generals, and State Department officials were demanding that a similar U.S. policy of censorship be put in place by the president. Strongly disagreeing with this approach toward dealing with news of the war, Creel argued that instead of instituting an administrative policy that would act to suppress the dissemination of information about World War I, Wilson should create a governmental agency that would work to control the public distribution of news about the conflict. In this way, suggested Creel, the president could "inspire Americans to see the struggle as a patriotic crusade." Agreeing with Creel, Wilson quickly established the Committee on Public Information (CPI), appointing Creel to head up the agency.

Creel's committee would eventually employ as many as 150,000 people and distribute 75 million pieces of print literature, including 60 million copies of the president's "Fourteen Points" for a "lasting peace" after the Allies won the war. Taking advantage of the extensive resources provided to him by the U.S. government, once appointed, Creel immediately set about developing a core group of public relations people, professional historians, and individuals from the entertainment industry to assist him in putting in motion a campaign of "moral publicity." Such a campaign was necessary, said Creel, in order to develop the "war will" of the American people. In a democracy such as ours, he argued, the will to make war depended on "the degree to which each one of all people of that democracy can concentrate and consecrate body and soul and spirit in a supreme effort of spirit and sacrifice." According to Creel, the completion of this hallowed act would be realized only if "a passionate belief in the justice of America's cause" could "meld the people of the United States into one white hot mass instinct with fraternity, devotion, courage and deathless determination" (Thomas, 2003).

One of the first things Creel did as he began to organize the CPI was to create a vast body of volunteer speakers, some 75,000 strong, who gave short impassioned,

nationalistic speeches at public gatherings. These so-called “Four Minute Men”—whose name was an allusion both to the Minutemen of the Revolutionary War and to the time it took a projectionist to change film reels at the movie houses in which these men and women so often delivered their speeches—were sent updates on the “state of the war effort, including several sample speeches written by top advertising copywriters on the committee’s staff” (Thomas, 2003). Although the Four Minute Men would eventually give their speeches at various public venues—including lodge and labor halls, churches, lumber camps, and even Native American reservations—it was no coincidence that the bulk of their orations were presented at the many movie houses that were now spread across the country. By the time America entered the war in 1917, thousands of Americans were packing these theaters each week, eager to watch the latest cinematic release. Well aware of the power of film to shape the public’s opinion, especially after the successful release of D. W. Griffith’s *Birth of a Nation* in 1915, Creel called on his entertainment industry associates to produce propaganda pictures that could be used to demonstrate the wholesomeness of American life and to “slander all things German.” They responded with films such as *The Prussian Cur*, *The Hun Within*, *The Kaiser: The Beast of Berlin*, and *My Four Years in Germany* (all 1918).

Interestingly, although *The Prussian Cur* and *The Hun Within* were not directed by Griffith, they were nevertheless connected to him. *The Prussian Cur* was directed by Raoul Walsh, who, although he began his film career as a stage actor in New York City, eventually became an assistant to Griffith. The plot of Walsh’s film was thin at best, although there was an interesting twist provided by the casting of one of the lead actors. Otto Goltz, who played a villainous German spy in the picture, actually did spy for Germany. He was captured by British forces, however, and ultimately cooperated with the Allies. In the end, he was granted asylum in the United States and finally made his way to Hollywood, where he was chosen for a part in Walsh’s picture. Perhaps what is best remembered about this film, however, are the scenes showing the “crucifixion” of an Allied soldier at the hands of the Germans. Although the report of a real crucifixion of a Canadian soldier in Belgium in April of 1915 was probably no more than a story meant to inflame the passions of the Allies—supposed eyewitness accounts proved to be contradictory, no crucified body was found, and no one could be sure who the murdered soldier might be—the gruesome tale nevertheless made headlines around the world. From that point on, the Allies used images of a soldier’s crucifixion over and over, including in *The Prussian Cur*.

As with *The Prussian Cur*, *The Hun Within* was directed by a longtime assistant of Griffith’s, Chester Withey. Indeed, so closely tied to Griffith was Withey that the latter was able to use Griffith’s production company to produce his own war picture. Griffith even received a writer’s credit for *The Hun Within*. The third of these three films, *The Kaiser: The Beast of Berlin*, was perhaps most representative of the cinematic propaganda machine put together by the Committee on Public Information. Oddly enough, in 1913, five years before *The Kaiser: The Beast of Berlin* was made, and four years before America entered World War I, the *New York Times*, celebrating the 25th anniversary of his coronation, heralded the German Kaiser as the world’s “Chief Peacemaker”; in fact, said the *Times*, he is “the greatest factor for peace that our time can

show.” Along with this effusive praise from the powerful New York newspaper came tributes from figures such as Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and Andrew Carnegie, who took out a full-page notice that concluded that “all citizens of the civilized world were the Kaiser’s ‘admiring loving debtors’ for his service to the cause of peace.”

Once America entered the war, however, the Kaiser became a primary target of Hollywood’s vitriolic attacks. Hollywood’s opening salvo came in the form of the film adaptation of James W. Gerard’s book *My Four Years in Germany*. Gerard had been the ambassador to Germany from 1913 until 1917, and *My Four Years in Germany* painted a picture of the road to war through his eyes. Directed by William Nigh and released on April 29, 1918, the film was a political propaganda piece in the form of a “documentary” that depicted the leaders of the German state as “lunatics” who ordered their troops to carry out horrific acts of violence against the women and children of Belgium. In the end, films such as *The Prussian Cur*, *The Hun Within*, *The Kaiser: The Beast of Berlin*, and *My Four Years in Germany* would go a long way toward defining an unsettling divide between American patriotism and un-American dissent during and after the war.

See also: War Film, The

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—Philip C. DiMare

DOCUMENTARY, THE. There is no unifying characteristic of the documentary. These films deal with a range of subject matters and make use of a wide variety of cinematic conventions. It is therefore difficult to define exactly what a documentary is, but a broad assumption that unifies them is that they address the world we live in as opposed to one imagined by the filmmaker (Nichols, 2001). Because filmmaking is always a construction, however, an unmediated representation of events is impossible. The history of the form is therefore shaped by an ongoing negotiation between documentary filmmakers and their audiences.

One of the earliest and most influential documentaries was Robert Flaherty's *Nanook of the North: A Story of Life and Love in the Actual Arctic* (1922). While making this first feature-length documentary film, the director lived with an Inuit family for a number of years, shooting on location in harsh Arctic conditions. As the camera equipment was heavy and temperamental, Flaherty was unable to capture events as they happened, so he asked his subjects to reenact missed events for him. He also wanted to provide film audiences with images of native peoples living their lives as they did before their worlds were touched by Europeans. Flaherty asked "Nanook," for instance—his real name was Allakariallak—to recreate precontact practices such as hunting wild animals with a spear, even though at this point Allakariallak regularly used a rifle. Staging scenes was not uncommon among early documentary filmmakers, so Flaherty's actions were not unique. Yet his desire to make what he would describe as an "authentic" feature led Flaherty to turn his film into a sort of hybrid work, in which he wove a fictional narrative thread through the picture's documentary images.

Flaherty's picture was a box-office success, and noted filmmakers such as Sergei Eisenstein and Orson Welles called *Nanook* a masterpiece. Interestingly, Flaherty had received his financing from private companies, but understanding the power of this cinematic form, the U.S. government began to fund documentaries in the 1930s, the most famous of which was Pare Lorentz's *The Plow That Broke the Plains* (1936). Sponsored by the Resettlement Administration, *The Plow* was just one example of numerous films that were produced by the U.S. government in an attempt to convince Americans that Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs were necessary and proper.

A short documentary, *The Plow* made the case that unregulated agricultural expansion had led to the creation of the nation's devastating dust bowl culture.

As the 1930s came to a close, the government involved itself in fewer and fewer state-sponsored cinematic projects. Indeed, by 1940, the government had decided that it would no longer make its own films. All of this changed, however, after America entered World War II in 1941 (Ellis and McLane, 2005). Developing a Bureau of Motion Pictures, the U.S. government turned to Hollywood filmmakers to assist it in selling the war. Hollywood filmmakers flocked to the cause, with luminaries such as John Ford, John Huston, and Frank Capra hired by the government to direct films that would be used to educate both soldiers and the American public on the war effort. Capra, who volunteered his services to the War Department the day after the bombing of Pearl Harbor and who was commissioned into the Army on that day, went on to create a seven-part series entitled *Why We Fight*. Combining newsreels and reenactments of real events, the films in this series were used as instructional tools to help inform—and inspire—newly enlisted American troops.

After the war ended, government funding for documentaries was once again curtailed; during the 1950s, however, a new source of revenue—and distribution—began to emerge with the increasingly popular medium of television. Each of the major networks developed their own documentary series, most notably Edward R. Murrow and Fred W. Friendly's *See It Now*, which ran on CBS until 1958. The subject matter of these shows revolved around current events, human interest stories, and a "look back" at moments of historical significance. Interestingly, the limitations inherent to airing documentaries during rigidly programmed time slots—which included commercial breaks—largely dictated the form the televised documentary took during the 1950s (Ellis and McLane, 2005). Television, though, has remained a consistent source for documentary funding and distribution, particularly the Public Broadcasting System—a venue not subject to the commercial mandates imposed on the networks—which has maintained long-term associations with filmmakers like Frederick Wiseman and Ken Burns.

During the late 1950s and early 1960s, a new documentary movement emerged. Known as "direct cinema" for its commitment to the ideals of *cinéma vérité*—truth in cinema—the movement was headed by directors such as Wiseman, Robert Drew, Richard Leacock, D. A. Pennebaker, and David and Albert Maysles, some of whom had launched their careers working on the ABC-TV series *Close Up!* before branching out on their own. Seeking to develop an objective, observational approach that made the cinematic process as unobtrusive as possible, these filmmakers adopted the use of lightweight, handheld 16mm cameras and synchronized sound equipment that allowed them to shoot much more spontaneously. Using their direct cinema approach, these directors recorded events ranging from political conventions to the landmark gathering that was Woodstock.

The truth-in-cinema claims of the direct cinema movement were called into question in 1968 when Jim McBride's *David Holzman's Diary* was released. A movie about the process of documentary filmmaking, McBride's offering—which follows cinephile David Holzman as he records his own life—was a biting satire that sought to expose

the lie of cinematic objectivity. As *New York Times* film critic Nora Sayre suggested during the early 1970s, “As a voyeur, a gentle intruder into other people’s lives, [Holzman] can’t understand that the filming makes his subjects feel self-conscious, or that ‘reality’ is altered by the presence of his camera and his tape recorder and his lavalier mike. . .” (Sayre, 1973).

Interestingly, McBride’s film went a long way toward ushering in the more self-reflexive approach to documentary filmmaking that characterized the 1980s. Errol Morris’s *The Thin Blue Line* (1988), for instance, consciously used documentary-style re-enactments to highlight the contradictory viewpoints of eyewitness testimonies concerning the murder of a police officer. The form evolved even further as the 1990s unfolded toward the new millennium, as late twentieth-century audiences were deluged with a proliferation of “reality TV” shows such *The Real World*, *Big Brother*, and *Survivor*. These shows, which claimed that their subjects were simply being recorded as they lived their lives as “real people,” were ultimately revealed to be highly stylized, with producers designing situations in a deliberate attempt to create on-set conflict. These 1990s shows gave birth to twenty-first-century reality show offspring, such as Donald Trump’s *The Apprentice*, Bravo’s *Top Chef* and *Project Runway* (which switched over to Lifetime), and TLC’s *John and Kate Plus Eight*, the latter treating fans to the spectacle of John and Kate Gosselin trying to raise “two sets of multiples”—twin girls and sextuplets—as their marriage fell apart on national television.

The first decade of the new millennium saw resurgence in the popularity of feature-length theatrical documentaries. No filmmaker benefited more from this renewed interest in the cinematic form than Michael Moore, who attracted legions of fans—and an equal number of critics—after releasing films such as *Roger & Me* (1989), *Bowling for Columbine* (2002), *Fahrenheit 9/11* (2004), and *Sicko* (2007). Although Moore’s films have been widely viewed—generating millions of dollars in revenue—perhaps the most important development in regard to the distribution of documentary-style filmic material has been the explosive growth of the Internet, which now allows individuals to upload their own material onto Web sites and instantly disseminate it across the globe. Animation, CGI, and digital cameras are currently taking the documentary form in interesting new directions; and as this technology advances, our understanding of what constitutes a documentary will no doubt continue to evolve.

See also: Cinéma Vérité

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—Tom Smith

DRIVE-IN THEATERS. Drive-in theaters, a mid-twentieth-century venue for viewing motion pictures, have influenced movie attendance and fast-food services. Movie attendance had dropped during the early 1930s, as people hired a babysitter, dressed for their outing to the theater, and then encountered parking problems once they arrived. Richard Hollingshead (1900–1975) devised a convenient solution: outdoor theaters that became known as “ozoners.”

On June 6, 1933, Hollingshead opened Park-In Theatres, Inc., near Camden, New Jersey. This first drive-in theater was called the Automobile Movie Theatre. It offered a family movie for 25 cents and was shown in a 500 by 500 foot lot, with capacity for 336 cars. Other outdoor theaters grew in capacity, and by 1942 there were 95 ozoners in 27 states. The number of drive-ins in the United States rose dramatically after World War II, peaking at 4,063 in 1958. During the 1950s, drive-ins got bigger: Stanford Kohlberg’s Starlite Drive-In, near Oak Lawn, Illinois, for instance, expanded to 1,875 outdoor spaces; interestingly, it also included an enclosed auditorium that seated 1,000 walk-in viewers. During its opening weekend, the theater featured live entertainment: the hillbilly group Sleepy Hollow Gang. Other acts booked included sway pole artist Penney Millette, human cannonball “The Great Wilno,” and various circus acts.



Drive-in theater sign advertising *River of No Return*, 1954. The first drive-in movie theater was opened in New Jersey in 1933, although the theaters didn’t reach the height of their popularity until the 1950s and 1960s. (Library of Congress)

The movies shown in these drive-in venues had often been released several weeks earlier in conventional, walk-in theaters.

During the 1950s, food service was refined into a profitable venture for ozoners. In 1952, for example, for every dollar of ticket sales, 45 cents was spent on concessions at drive-ins, compared to the 26 cents spent at indoor theaters. While typical foods sold were popcorn, soft drinks, hot dogs, and candy, Jack Farr's Trail Drive-In, in Houston, Texas, served chicken, tamales, shrimp, and chili. Some theaters provided a Snack-Kar to deliver refreshments to viewers. Viewers at one North Carolina theater ordered food during the movie by pressing a special button on the pole, and spoke into a microphone—the food was delivered to their car. Prior to the construction of pizza parlors, the drive-in theater was the only place in many communities that served pizza. Restaurant equipment entrepreneur Al Gordon (Morris Gordon & Son) recommended that drive-ins provide a more cafeteria-style snack bar, which proved successful. Theaters advertised their food services during film trailers and at intermissions.

When first opened, drive-in theaters proved enormously popular, especially among families with small children and romance-hungry teenagers. Seeking to be left alone, Elvis Presley even rented out whole drive-in lots for his private parties. Overbuilding, the institution of nationwide daylight saving time in 1967, and a waning interest in this pop-culture novelty, led to decreasing profitability in the 1970s and '80s. By 1987, fewer than 1,000 drive-ins remained in America; indeed, many of today's most avid young moviegoers have never piled into the car and gone to the "drive-in."

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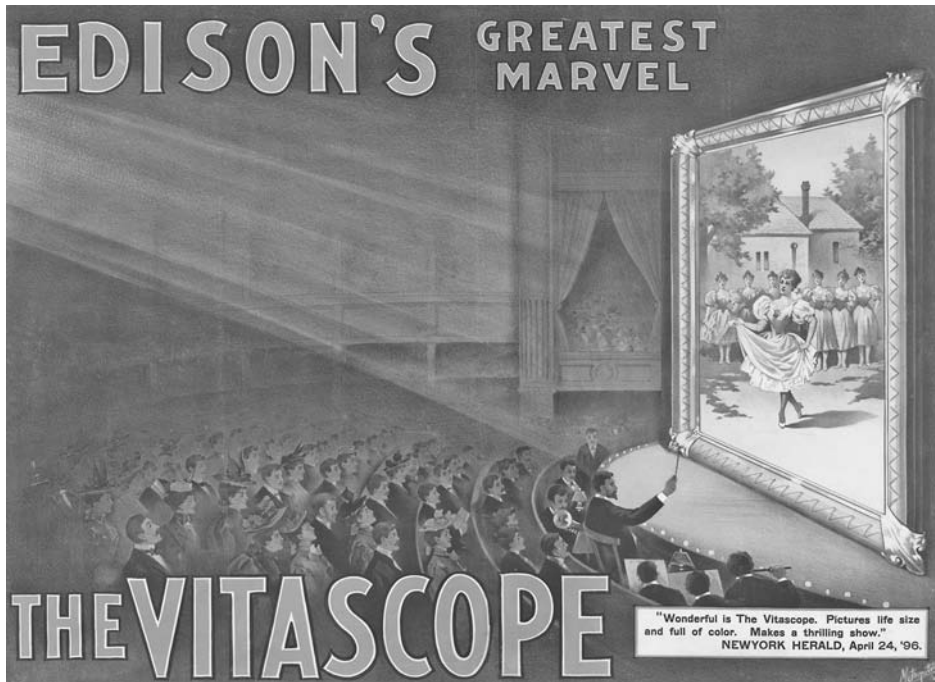
—Ralph Hartsock

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EARLY MOVIE HOUSES. The period from 1894 to 1924 is regarded by many as the pioneering era of film exhibition in the United States. The venues that showed these early moving pictures ranged in scope from the small peep-show parlor and storefront nickelodeon to the lavish movie and vaudeville palace. Thomas Edison's development of the Kinetoscope paved the way for the peep-show parlor. Although it could be considered the first incarnation of the movie house, the peep show was very different from modern exhibition venues. Customers looked through a magnifying eyepiece as they viewed a series of small photographic images on cylinders. The first set of these machines reached penny arcades and hotel lobbies across the United States early in 1894, and soon the peep show became part of the modern amusement landscape. Edison sold the equipment and film prints for the peep show for \$10 to \$15, and the first public Kinetoscope parlor was opened in a converted shoe store at 1155 Broadway in New York City, on April 14, 1894.

The peep-show parlor would soon give way to more modern forms of movie exhibition. The Lumière brothers developed a new way to view moving pictures with their Cinématographe. They projected images onto a flat surface, and for the first time, movies became a shared experience. On June 29, 1896, the Lumières' Cinématographe was presented at Keith's Union Square Theater in New York City. That same year, Edison unveiled his version of the new technology, the Vitascope. The Vitascope system was first exhibited to the press on April 3, 1896, and, soon after, publicly exhibited at Koster and Bial's Music Hall, a well-known vaudeville theater located near Herald Square in New York City.

At first, it seemed that motion pictures were nothing more than a passing fad, a curiosity that filled the space between the popular vaudeville acts of the time. However, increased demand for film product toward the end of the nineteenth century led to the eventual transformation of some vaudeville theaters into full-fledged movie houses by the early 1920s. Theaters that housed early film exhibitions were often large, luxurious, and opulent. The mixing of vaudeville and film in large and ornate theaters was a result of three factors: the saturation of large cities with nickelodeons, leading to a highly



An advertisement for Edison's *The Vitascope* motion picture, 1896. (Library of Congress)

competitive exhibition market; a scarcity of new film product; and a desire on the part of some exhibitors to attract more middle-class customers (Allen, 1979).

The dominance of the vaudeville theater was eventually challenged as filmmakers and enterprising businessmen began to target the burgeoning market of immigrant and working-class audiences. The storefront nickelodeon—so named because it cost only a nickel to enter—began to dot urban and working-class neighborhoods at the turn of the century. There were several reasons why the nickelodeon became increasingly popular at this time. Perhaps the most important of these was the fact that it was much cheaper to operate a nickelodeon than a vaudeville theater. In New York City, for example, average costs for owning and operating a theater totaled \$2,500, compared to only \$500 for a nickelodeon. The nickelodeon owner could also draw a more diverse non-English-speaking audience because films were silent. At the height of the nickelodeon's popularity, as many as 7,000 to 10,000 of these storefront movie houses sprang up across the United States.

Notable early movie house owners included Marcus Loew, Jules and Stanley Mastbaum, the Balaban brothers, and Samuel Katz. These businessmen became dominant in the movie house industry in different regions of the United States—Loew in New York City, the Mastbaums in Philadelphia, and Balaban and Katz in Chicago. Shrewd and ambitious entrepreneurs, these men began to link individual movie houses into theater chains during the 1920s. The emergence of such chains set the stage for the development of the modern movie megaplex of the twenty-first century.

See also: New Technologies in Filmmaking; Silent Era, The

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—Anna Thompson Hajdik

ETHNIC AND IMMIGRANT CULTURE CINEMA. Portrayals of ethnic and immigrant cultures in American film may be divided into six historical periods: the silent film era; 1927 to 1941; World War II and the early Cold War; 1960 to 1980; 1980 to 1995; and 1995 to the present. Although each period included significant developments and landmark films, the 1980s and early 1990s represented a particularly important watershed. It was not until then that American cinema began to produce a historically and culturally informed body of work that featured non-European as well as European immigrants. Since the 1980s, both Hollywood and independent filmmakers of all races and ethnicities have contributed to a more genuinely multicultural cinema. Unfortunately, such projects still represent only a handful of American films released each year, both in terms of diverse subject matter and overall cinematic output, and by no means signal the end of the depiction of destructive filmic stereotypes.

Silent films emerged as a popular art form in the middle of what is sometimes called the "great wave" of immigration to the United States, which occurred from the 1880s to the 1920s. Europeans of all nationalities dominated arrivals during the great wave, though migration rates from Mexico were high for two decades after the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution in 1910. Depictions of immigrants in silent cinema drew on a variety of stereotypes of foreignness. Among the more common was the "Latin lover," played by immigrant actors such as Ramon Novarro and Rudolph Valentino. What was important about these characters was not so much any ethnically specific "Latinness," but a swarthy, exoticized Otherness, the multiple valences of which were exemplified by *The Sheik* (1921), in which the Italian Valentino plays an Arab suitor of a British heiress whose love is scandalous until it is discovered that he has European ancestors.

Characters defined by stock ethnic traits in the silent film era tended to represent groups that had only recently joined the immigrant flows. These stereotypes included the "money-grubbing Jew," the "Arabian harem girl," and the Mexican "greaser" or "bandit." Certain films during this period also portrayed members of a more established immigrant group, the Irish, as non-American Others, at first negatively but later more sympathetically. Earlier films portrayed Irish men as coarse, hard-drinking

laborers and women as maids and other working-class girls with questionable morals. By the 1920s, male Irish characters were more likely to be policeman and priests, while females played romantic leads—Irish actresses like Mary Pickford even became popular celebrities.

The end of the silent era coincided with the end of the great wave, as Congress passed highly restrictive immigration legislation in 1921 and 1924 and the Great Depression dramatically slowed migration worldwide. The National Origins Act of 1924 established immigration limits based on the 1890 census—and therefore discriminated against Southern and Eastern Europeans and other groups that had not arrived in large numbers before that date. It also barred all Japanese immigration, thus completing an incremental ban on Asians that began with the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. Hollywood's early ethnic "talkies" reflected the nativist mood and concomitant pressures to assimilate. Indeed, the very first movie with synchronized sound, *The Jazz Singer* (1927), dealt with the difficult choices facing a member of a recent immigrant group, Jewish singer Jake Rabinowitz (Al Jolson), as he tries to achieve success as a mainstream performer. Interestingly, Asian American characters were more widely represented on the big screen than were Asian immigrants on quota lists. Inevitably, though, they were played by white actors in "yellowface" makeup, as was the case in two popular series—the *Charlie Chan* and *Dr. Fu Manchu* films that were made during the early 1930s. Detective Chan, often played by Swedish American actor Warner Oland, used stereotypical Asian ingenuity and half-baked Confucian wisdom to solve cases. Fu Manchu, most famously played by horror film icon Boris Karloff, represented a continuation of the silent film archetype of the conniving Asian nemesis.

The first decade of pictures with sound also saw the rise of one of the most important major Hollywood genres focusing on the immigrant experience, the gangster film. Key examples included mafia classics *Little Caesar* (1931) and *Scarface* (1932), which depicted Italian Americans in quintessentially American narratives in which protagonists (most played, ironically, by Jewish actors) sought social mobility and acceptance by achieving wealth and fame. Significantly, these ethnic gangsters were unable to overcome their inherent base desires, and ultimately it was not the law that brought them down, but their own vanity—and venality. Films portraying Southern and Eastern European immigrant groups suggested that their place in society was conditioned by their ability to sacrifice individual gain, jettison old-country values, and assimilate into mainstream American society. That their struggle to belong was dramatized at all, however, represented an advance over depictions of Chinese American characters like Charlie Chan, whose ethnicity was nothing more than a painted-on novelty that aided his investigations.

In the 1940s and 1950s, major domestic and world events influenced the feel of movies about American immigrants. World War II produced so-called Good Neighbor Policy movies celebrating alliances with Latin American nations—*Down Argentine Way* (1940) and *The Gang's All Here* (1943), for example—and, occasionally, sympathetic cinematic portrayals of Latinos in the United States, such as *The Ox-Bow Incident* (1943). Hollywood's portrayals of immigrants from Axis nations matched the double

standard exhibited by U.S. policy. Just as the government subjected Japanese Americans to mass incarceration while for the most part leaving German- and Italian Americans alone, Hollywood, in movies like *The Purple Heart* (1944) and *The Story of GI Joe* (1945), featured combat units of European ethnics that were valorized while presenting audiences with demonizing depictions of the Japanese. It was not until the Korean War classic *The Steel Helmet* (1951) that Hollywood discovered the dramatic possibilities of a story of Asian American soldiers fighting against an Asian enemy.

The latter was among a significant group of postwar “social problem films” featuring immigrant themes. Others included *Gentleman’s Agreement* (1947), which exposed anti-Semitism in the United States, and *Man from Del Rio* and *Giant* (both 1956), which portrayed racism against Mexican Americans. But McCarthyism and the Hollywood blacklist put many socially conscious filmmakers and writers out of work—including the makers of *Salt of the Earth* (1954), which dramatized a Mexican American miners’ strike—and discouraged others from taking up controversial issues. In this atmosphere, the emblematic ethnic film was the assimilationist urban drama about European Americans, which may have peaked in popularity in 1955, when two such pictures depicting Italian Americans (*The Rose Tattoo* and *Marty*) won several Academy Awards, the latter for best picture.

Attitudes toward minorities in American culture underwent a dramatic shift in the 1960s and 1970s. The African American freedom struggle and other movements that followed in its wake not only demanded civil rights, but ignited a vigorous “politics of recognition” that emphasized the need for more inclusive cultural citizenship. In national policymaking, the Hart-Cellar Act of 1965 abolished the quota system established in 1924 and opened the door to increased immigration in the coming decades. These changes, however, were hardly apparent in Hollywood’s treatment of immigration and ethnicity. The most important filmic representations early in this period included the highly lauded *West Side Story* (1961), a musical about Puerto Rican gang rivalry in New York City. Although Rita Moreno took home an Oscar for Best Supporting Actress, few quality roles for Latinas existed, and the Puerto Rican actress did not do another movie for seven years. Martial arts superstar Bruce Lee achieved cross-over success with films like *Enter the Dragon* and *Fists of Fury* (both 1973), but still represented exoticized Asian culture, and he left the United States after he was passed over for the lead role in the American hit TV series *Kung Fu* in favor of Anglo actor David Carradine. In contrast, this period marked a golden age for Italian Americans in Hollywood as Francis Ford Coppola made his landmark *Godfather* I and II (1972 and 1974, respectively); Martin Scorsese’s *Mean Streets* (1973), *Taxi Driver* (1976), and *Raging Bull* (1980) appeared; and two of the era’s most popular films were portraits of working-class Italian Americans, *Rocky* (1976) and *Saturday Night Fever* (1977). Meanwhile, Jewish actor Dustin Hoffman emerged as an A-list performer, Woody Allen won over national audiences with East Coast Jewish humor, and the early days of Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe were portrayed sensitively in *Hester Street* (1975).

In part because of the 1965 Hart-Cellar Act, immigration rates increased in the following decades, and for the first time the majority of arrivals came from Asia and Latin America. Although American politics took a sharp turn to the right in the 1980s, it was

not a time of strict anti-immigration legislation. The Refugee Act of 1980 established yearly quotas for those facing what the government characterized as a fear of persecution that was “well-founded”; immigration legislation of 1986 provided amnesty for three million undocumented immigrants; and the Japanese American redress movement achieved success in 1988 when the Reagan administration issued a formal apology and granted \$20,000 each to those who were incarcerated during World War II. In Hollywood, many filmmakers continued to draw on stereotypes, like the martial arts *sensei* of the *Karate Kid* series or the emotionally unhinged Italian Americans of *Moonstruck* (1987). But in general, the 1980s and early 1990s saw many advances, among the most important the release of works by Asian American and Latino filmmakers. Wayne Wang’s pioneering *Chan Is Missing* (1982) explored Chinese American identity, and his follow-up, *Dim Sum: A Little Bit of Heart* (1984), dealt with tensions between first- and second-generation Chinese immigrants. Wang later completed the post–World War II period drama *Eat a Bowl of Tea* (1989), and an adaptation of Amy Tan’s bestseller *The Joy Luck Club* (1993). Two other widely distributed Asian American films from the period dealt with controversial romantic relationships and resulting family complications: Mira Nair’s *Mississippi Masala* (1992) and Ang Lee’s *The Wedding Banquet* (1993).

Latino directors who made breakthroughs in the early 1980s included Luis Valdez, whose *Zoot Suit* (1981) adapted for the screen the director’s play about the Zoot Suit Riots of 1943, and Gregory Nava, whose *El Norte* (1983) provided gritty details of the Central American civil wars that many migrants were fleeing, of crossing the border illegally, and of the difficulties of working manual and domestic labor in the United States. Valdez went on to make the hit *La Bamba* (1987), a biopic of rock singer Ritchie Valens, and Nava later directed *My Family/Mi Familia* (1995), a multi-generational saga of a Mexican American family, and the eponymously named *Selena* (1996), a biopic about the life—and tragically bizarre death—of the Tex-Mex singer. The latter two pictures helped launch the film career of Puerto Rican American superstar Jennifer Lopez. Other important projects included two films that responded to perceptions of Mexican Americans as noncitizens in very different ways: Cheech Marin’s *Born in East L.A.* (1987) played the accidental deportation of a Mexican American citizen for very pointed laughs, while Edward James Olmos’s *American Me* (1993) offered an unsparing look at urban gangs, utilizing turf wars to explore issues of local and national belonging.

The mid-1990s saw the rise of nativism in the United States, symbolized by the passing of California’s Proposition 187, which prohibited illegal immigrants from using state services, in 1994, and by increasingly restrictionist immigration policies, trends which were only furthered by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Related or not to these developments, immigrant cultures cinema evolved in several ways after the mid-1990s. First, directors like Wayne Wang and Ang Lee achieved mainstream success with pictures that had little to do with their ethnicity—Wang with *Smoke* (1995) and *Maid in Manhattan* (2002), among others, and Lee with films like *Sense and Sensibility* (1995), *The Ice Storm* (1997), and *Brokeback Mountain* (2004). Second, many young directors, rather than celebrating ethnic heritage or dramatizing

struggles with discrimination, made irreverent, stereotype-busting films. Asian American efforts in this regard included *Yellow* (1997) and *Better Luck Tomorrow* (2002). Third, an increasing number of multiethnic dramas appeared, most notably *Crash*, which won the Academy Award for Best Picture in 2005; similarly multistranded films such as *Babel* (2006) placed immigrant stories in a transnational context. Finally, along with stereotypical portrayals of anti-American terrorists and other stock characters, more complexly and sympathetically rendered Middle Eastern immigrant protagonists have appeared in some films. Particularly noteworthy was *The Visitor* (2008), in which a highly sympathetic Syrian immigrant is detained and separated from his family as the result of a simple misunderstanding at a New York subway station. Like many of the best films about immigration in the United States over the past century, *The Visitor* dramatized the meanings of home, of citizenship, and of processes of boundary setting, and how these issues affect newcomers and longtime residents alike.

See also: African Americans in Film; Native Americans in Film

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—Kenneth F. Maffitt

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FEMINIST FILM CRITICISM. Feminist film criticism is more than simply film studies with women injected as authors and subjects. Like the movements that inspired it, feminist film criticism deconstructs the role of gender, heteronormativity, race, and patriarchy in society. Since its inception in the 1970s, it has changed the way we think about film, spectatorship, and creative impulses.

While many people locate the beginning of feminist film criticism in Laura Mulvey's landmark essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975), its origins are actually found earlier in the theories that inspired it. First, it takes as its roots Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis. It relies heavily on ideas about ego formation, the pleasure of looking, and the castration complex—all concepts originally articulated by Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan in the first half and middle of the twentieth century. Second, feminist film criticism is inspired by semiotics, a linguistic study of signs and signifiers, also originally articulated in the first half of the twentieth century. Third, it draws on Althusserian Marxism, proposed by Louis Althusser in the mid-twentieth century, which concentrates on the role of ideology in society. Finally, the broader feminist movement and specifically the feminist arts movement, which began in the early 1970s, significantly influenced feminist film criticism; most notably, perhaps, the Women's Film Festival that was organized in Edinburgh.

After the seminal works of Simone de Beauvoir (*The Second Sex*, 1949) and Betty Friedan (*The Feminine Mystique*, 1963) circulated in popular discourse, several women both inside and outside of academia explored the nuances of gender. Among these women were those who focused primarily on the relationship between art and the construction and deployment of gender. In 1972, Claire Johnston organized the Women's Film Festival in Edinburgh, at which she released a pamphlet entitled "Women's Cinema as Counter-Cinema." In it Johnston suggested that because most Hollywood films are told from a male viewpoint, they generate what can be understood as a "false consciousness" among women: films merely encourage female viewers to internalize and adopt false images, thereby reinforcing feelings of submission and inadequacy. Johnston later expanded her ideas in *Notes on Women's Cinema* (1973). This festival, among other things, inspired several other feminists to confront the role of gender in cinema.

Among them were Marjorie Rosen (*Popcorn Venus*, 1973), Molly Haskell (*From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in the Movies*, 1974), and British film theorist Mulvey.

As mentioned, in a 1975 issue of *Screen* Mulvey published her extraordinarily important essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." While reliant on many theorists who had come before her, Mulvey's article would prove to be one of the most influential in film theory and feminist thought. In it she explores the relationship between gender and cinema, arguing that "in a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between [the categories] active/male and passive/female" (Mulvey, 1989). In order to make her argument, Mulvey relied on two different psychoanalytic theories that impacted feminist film criticism in general: Freud's idea of "scopophilia," or the pleasure of looking, and Lacan's theory of the "mirror stage," the reflective point at which every child comes to understand the self as a subject that is different from, yet always in dialectical relationship, with all "others." Armed with these core tenets of psychoanalysis, Mulvey developed her feminist film theory.

Primarily, Mulvey, like Johnston, argues that Hollywood films are framed by a male "gaze"—the active (male) self "looking" at the passive (female) Other. This gaze expresses itself in three ways: by way of the camera (usually operated by a man); by way of the actor's (dominant) position in relationship to the actress; and by way of the (male/female) spectator looking at the imagistic objects on the screen. In all three moments, the male subject gazes at—and thus shapes the identity of—the female object: the camera (most often operated by a man) lingers over the body of the actress; the actor-subject controls the actress-object; and the spectator (male/female) looks from the point of view of the camera/actor, always already in the position of the masculine/active/subject. As Lacan would suggest, then, the spectator (male/female) subject always and everywhere identifies with—and is identified by—the active gaze that defines the dialectical moment of looking at the passive Other; what Mulvey might call the cinematic mirror stage. Mulvey goes on to argue that the gaze is not simply an acting out of unconscious desire—although it is certainly that—but is something that is consciously shaped by the techniques—and the technicians—used in traditional filmmaking. For instance, says Mulvey, female characters are most often filmed in soft focus in order to make their image more appealing—less threatening—to the spectator who gazes. And how exactly does the female spectator gaze? Her visual pleasure, argues Mulvey, can only be experienced in one of two ways: either she gazes "into the mirror," ultimately identifying with the passive object of male desire; or she identifies with the male who gazes, thereby participating in her own objectification. In this way, Mulvey contends, the female viewer is in fact a transvestite viewer.

Mulvey's complex examination of the relationship between the male gaze and cinema had a profound impact on those involved in film theory—indeed, it may be argued that "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" forever changed the face of film studies. It also had a powerful effect on feminist filmmakers, who now sought to liberate the female subject by troping traditional ideas of cinematic production. Films such as Barbara Hammer's *Dyketactics* (1974) and Julie Dash's *Daughters of the Dust* (1991), then, experiment with how to release women from their position as passive objects. For

instance, in *Daughters of the Dust*, Dash not only focuses the narrative almost completely on African American women, something almost unheard of in Hollywood cinema, but she also strives to create a film that allows female spectators to engage artistically with the film without being degraded. This is accomplished by creating a symbolically jarring aesthetic that is marked by the use of folk song, the dialectic of the South Carolina Sea Islands, and the inclusion of a story told by an unborn female child who is still in the womb.

As so often happens with thinkers who force us to consider things from radically new perspectives, however, Mulvey's idea of the male gaze eventually became the focus of a great deal of theoretical critique. While it was never completely rejected, several feminist film theorists who came after Mulvey questioned some of her premises. One such theorist was Kaja Silverman. An American film theorist and historian, Silverman explored the nonvisual elements of film and their relationship to gender. While Mulvey's exploration of the cinematic gaze was certainly important, Silverman argued, what about the equally important soundtrack in film? In her book *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (1988) (note the reference to Lacanian psychoanalysis), Silverman suggests that the soundtrack in traditional Hollywood films also serves to make women the object of the powerful male subject. She maintains that films are filled with the sounds of women crying, panting, and screaming; and, more importantly, the female voice is almost always grounded in the body—very rarely used as a voice-over or omniscient narrator—thereby denying it the possibility of breaking free from the objectified bodily images of screen actresses. As Silverman points out, however, several new feminist filmmakers are not simply playing with filmic images of women, they are also reimagining the sounds of women on-screen. In providing viewers with a female narrator who is an unborn child in *Daughters of the Dust*, for instance, Dash releases both the viewer and the viewed from the objectified, passive, filmic body.

While Silverman's examination of gender and sound in cinema may be understood to have expanded Mulvey's theory in another—auditory—direction while still retaining its general premise, other thinkers called into question her original suppositions. In her 1987 work *Technologies of Gender*, for example, Teresa de Lauretis questioned Mulvey's general over-reliance on feminist critique, and more specifically, her foundational binary opposition “man”/“woman.” According to de Lauretis, Mulvey's rigid binary structure tends to cover over the many nuances that may emerge when these categories are allowed to slip and slide over, around, and through one another. In theorizing these categories, de Lauretis was influenced by the work of the late French poststructuralist thinker Michel Foucault, specifically his iconic work *The History of Sexuality*. In this multivolume work, written between 1976 and 1984, Foucault argued that sexual identity—in all its polymorphously perverse manifestations—had come to be defined by a restrictive discourse that rigidly enforced the categorical relationships normal/heterosexual-abnormal/homo-/bi-/asexual.

Building on these Foucauldian foundations, de Lauretis suggested that the focus of feminist critique should be on the struggle between women and “Woman”—the latter defined by the cultural discourses that act to construct gender, or the “technologies of

gender,” what de Lauretis understands as the sociohistorical gender constructions that arbitrarily define the constitutive boundaries of “male,” “female,” “man,” and “woman.” More than being merely words, de Lauretis argues, these are rule-based concepts that frame specific roles and attitudes about gender identity. Instead of simply focusing on the sights and sounds of women in film, then, says de Lauretis, feminist filmmakers need to begin to deconstruct the “Woman” in films. Thus, they should play with traditional narrative strategies, with the sights and sounds that reinforce the technologies of gender, and, perhaps most importantly, recognize that there is not just one gaze but multiple ways of looking at that issue from the multiplicity of women and men who view films. Significantly, one of the ways in which de Lauretis would begin to explore certain of these non-normative ways of looking was in relationship to the theory of queer cinema.

Queer theories have developed in the last 40 years and have had a huge impact on feminist thinking generally, and on feminist film criticism specifically. During the 1980s, de Lauretis explored the relationship between the theory of queer cinema and of film theory in general. In her book *The Practice of Love: Lesbian Sexuality and Perverse Desire* (1987), she argued that it is not enough simply to inject lesbians into film narratives—especially in situations that are meant only to titillate male views—as this acts merely to instantiate the male gaze even more thoroughly. Instead, filmmakers need to disrupt representational (white/male/heterosexual) norms by recognizing and expressing lesbian sexuality as a radically alternative tropological discourse of desire.

Beyond what has already been discussed, Mulvey’s theories were also critiqued in relation to specific kinds of films. Several feminist film theorists used the ideas of the masculine-subject and the feminine-object to understand how different film genres reinforced patriarchy. Barbara Creed, for example, in her book *The Monstrous Feminine* (1993), applies feminist film critique to an understanding of women in horror films. She suggests that the horror film mirrors patriarchy’s powerful constructions of gender. Patriarchal ideology, she contends, constructs women as abject, or outside societal norms. Interestingly, however, Creed suggests that women in horror films may act to break down the patriarchal boundaries that frame traditional cinema. Building on the work of French feminist thinker Julia Kristeva—who has explored, especially in *Powers of Horror* (1982), how the woman in literature often functions as a “not me,” as a “thing” that crosses over acceptable boundaries—Creed argues that by way of border-crossing acts of transgression, horror film females may succeed in developing a sense of active (non-passive) agency. This would seem to call into question Mulvey’s notion that women are always already passive objects—never active subjects—in film. According to Creed, because men fear women because they are, as Freud says, castrated—and also because they may have the power to castrate—women in horror films may be understood to be more interesting and complicated than perhaps Mulvey’s theories suggest.

E. Ann Kaplan found Mulvey’s ideas problematic for other reasons. In *Looking for the Other: Feminism, Film, and the Imperial Other* (1996), she argues that much of feminist film theory takes as its foundational premise the relationship between the white male gaze and the white female object. This, however, suggests Kaplan, is a Eurocentric view that denies the participation of people of color in the visual pleasures of

cinema as both subjects and objects. For instance, how does the black male gaze work? What about the black female body as the object of not only the male gaze but also of the white female gaze? What about the power of the white female gaze over the black male body? In order to begin to answer some of these questions, Kaplan explores ideas about colonialism, race, and power that have been developed over the past 30 years by Frantz Fanon and others. She points out that because white women participated in colonialism, and held power over nonwhite victims of colonization, their gaze can be equally as powerful as the (white) male gaze.

Kaplan's work is complemented by the work of other feminist film critics. For example, bell hooks expands the notion of the female gaze beyond the idea of the powerful white female gaze of colonialism. For decades, and in several important works, hooks has been exploring the role of race in film and film theory. In her book *Reel to Real: Race, Sex, and Class at the Movies*, in particular, hooks specifically accuses feminist film criticism, like the feminist movement itself, of ignoring African American women. She argues that African Americans, and women specifically, have used the power of their own gaze as a way to oppose the white patriarchal system. Historically African Americans were not allowed to look directly at white bodies, hooks points out, and therefore not only by daring to look at white people but also by critiquing what they see, African Americans actively oppose conventional Hollywood film. Contrary to what Mulvey describes, then, African American women do not identify with their oppressors or submit to degraded images of women on screen, but in fact actively deconstruct and critique what they see. The reason that feminist film theorists have missed this, hooks argues, even when exploring race, is that they continue to assume that "women" comprise a monolithic category. Only when filmmakers and film theorists acknowledge the existence of African American women as unique spectators, hooks says, will the role of race be truly appreciated in the cinematic world.

Feminist film criticism has grown considerably since the advent of the Women in Film Festival of 1972. Indeed, it continues to thrive, invoking new and exciting theories. Alongside the powerful and important theories of race and sexuality that have changed the way feminist film criticism operates, theorists are exploring how new technologies, such as DVDs and the Internet, and the ability of audiences to view films in almost every imaginable time and space affects the gaze.

See also: Film Criticism; Male Gaze, The; Mulvey, Laura; Women in Film

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—Katharine Bausch

FILM CRITICISM. Film criticism in America takes many forms; it is found in newspapers, magazines, scholarly journals, and also on the radio, on television and on the Internet. Critics of the cinema assign meaning to films through interpretation and analysis. Some criticism is written for a general audience and published in popular magazines, such as the *New Yorker*, *Time*, *Esquire*, and *Rolling Stone*, or in general-circulation newspapers. Scholarly criticism is written for a well-informed or academic audience and is published in journals such as *Cinema Journal*, *Film Quarterly*, *The Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, and *Jump Cut*.

Early American film criticism emerged with the birth of film itself, and it focused on the spectacular elements of the technology. Frank E. Woods, a screenwriter for D. W. Griffith, wrote commentary in *The New York Dramatic Writer* in 1908 under the name, "The Spectator." Woods championed the art of film and helped build an audience for the new medium. Most early criticism appeared in trade periodicals and newspapers such as *Moving Picture World*, *Moving Picture News*, *Variety*, *Billboard*, and *Dramatic Mirror*. Poet Vachel Lindsay also wrote about film as a new art form in his 1915 book *The Art of the Moving Picture*. A year later, psychologist, Hugo Munsterberg focused on the imaginative possibilities of the cinema and its effects on audiences in *The Photoplay: A Psychological Study*.

Beginning in the 1920s, American film critics began to think about the social problems associated with the new medium such as class mixing, the effects on women and children, and the representation of undesirable behavior on screen. These concerns had a strong impact on Hollywood, which responded in 1922 by creating the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA). This organization, headed by former Postmaster General Will Hays, was responsible for monitoring the content of films to avoid overt sexuality and violence. Later this organization adopted the Motion Picture Production Code (1934–1968), which placed detailed restrictions on film content.

In Europe, early film criticism was characterized by a theoretical debate about the nature of the medium. Led by the Russian filmmaker and theorist Sergei Eisenstein, formalists saw film as an art form that could transcend its recording capabilities. Eisenstein believed that film was a powerful political tool whose expressive possibilities could be used to challenge the status quo and incite social change. His films *Strike* (1924)

and *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) vividly display his theory of montage, in which individual shots collide with each other to create meaning.

American film critics have tended to be more eclectic in their approach to the cinema. Social criticism flourished in the 1930s with such writers as Lewis Jacobs, Gilbert Seldes, Robert Sherwood, and Pare Lorentz. Both Jacobs and Lorentz were also filmmakers who made socially conscious documentaries. After World War II, humanist critics emerged who championed neglected genres and directors. James Agee, novelist, screenwriter (*The African Queen*, 1951), and critic, wrote for *Time* and *The Nation* in the 1940s. He proposed a compromise between realism and fantasy in film. Bosley Crowther, the venerated critic for the *New York Times* from 1940 to 1967, suggested that cinema is both a popular art form and an important social force. Emanuel “Manny” Farber, a respected artist and film critic, is known for his prolific writing in *The New Republic*, *The Nation*, *Commentary*, *Artforum*, *Film Culture*, and *Film Comment*. In a 1962 piece he derided the highbrow tendencies of Orson Welles, suggesting that the films of genre and B-movie directors were better cinematic products. He also sang the praises of “underground cinema,” a term he coined.

Genre criticism was developed more fully by Robert Warshow, who is best known for his work on gangster films and westerns. His influential essays “The Gangster as Tragic Hero” (1948) and “The Westerner” (1954) were originally published in *Partisan Review*, calling attention to the important place of these figures in American cinema. Warshow’s genre criticism lent weight to what others saw as mass-produced Hollywood products; his work helped to elevate genre films to the status of an art form.

A watershed moment for film criticism came in 1951 when André Bazin founded the French film journal *Cahiers du cinéma*. Bazin and his colleagues wrote essays praising the films of such Hollywood directors as Alfred Hitchcock, Howard Hawks, John Ford, Nicholas Ray, Fritz Lang, Anthony Mann, and Orson Welles. Writing for the journal, French critics defended the artistry of American commercial cinema, putting Hollywood on par with the much-lauded European cinemas. Bazin was outspoken in his love of realist compositions using detailed mise-en-scène and deep focus. He embraced Italian neorealism for its fidelity to daily life and was a fan of westerns, which he called “the American film, par excellence.”

In 1954, Bazin, somewhat reluctantly, published an article entitled “Une certaine tendance du cinéma français” (“A Certain Tendency in French Cinema”) in *Cahiers*. The article was written by a brash young filmmaker and critic named François Truffaut, who condemned what he called the French “cinema of quality.” He termed the traditional French cinema, characterized by lavish, studio-bound adaptations of great literary works, “*le cinéma du papa*,” or “our father’s cinema.” Instead he called for a “*politiques des auteurs*,” a “policy of authors,” which envisioned the director as literally the author of a film. In Truffaut’s opinion, directors should direct their own screenplays, and in so doing, put their own unique stamp on their films. Truffaut’s essay was a stinging rebuke of the French establishment cinema, but it paved the way for young filmmakers like Jean-Luc Godard, Alain Resnais, Eric Rohmer, Claude Chabrol, Jacques Rivette, Agnès Varda, and himself to develop a new approach to the medium, resulting in what came to be known as the “French New Wave.” Their films

exhibited youthful vitality, realism, and a sense of moral ambiguity. The impact of this movement was felt across the Atlantic, as Hollywood filmmakers adopted the stylistic innovations of the French New Wave directors.

Truffaut's notion of the "policy" of filmic authors was embraced by the American film critic Andrew Sarris, who, in 1962, termed it "auteur theory." Sarris argued in the *Village Voice* that the distinguishable personality of a film's director should be used in determining the film's value. Significantly, Sarris's reformulation of Truffaut's ideas sparked an intense debate with another American critic, Pauline Kael, who wrote for the *New Yorker* from 1967 to 1991. Kael urged against the use of formulas in judging films, preferring instead to use a more personal form of evaluation: if a film moved her in some way, it was a good film. Kael's prolific career includes criticism for the *New Yorker*, 13 books, and a short stint as an executive consultant for Paramount. Her strong views often ran counter to popular opinion; she championed the violent films of Sam Peckinpah and wrote an extended essay on *Citizen Kane* in which she credited writer Herman J. Mankiewicz with the film's success. Throughout the 1960s and '70s, Kael and Sarris traded insults and opinions in the pages of different magazines; although they disagreed about how to judge a cinematic work, their public debates helped to cultivate a fierce love of movies in American audiences.

Other innovations in film criticism have challenged these approaches to the cinema. Cultural critic Susan Sontag borrows elements of semiotics, or the study of signs, in her work on photography and film. This method of criticism examines the messages that individual images send to viewers when they are combined into codes and interpreted in a specific historical context. An intellectual star in the 1960s and '70s, Sontag published work in *Partisan Review* and *Commentary*, and in different film anthologies.

Feminist film criticism evolved in the 1970s, when critics began to examine the roles that women were playing on the screen and behind the camera. Molly Haskell's collection of essays *From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in the Movies* (1973, revised 1989) paved the way for other feminist critics. Her writing has appeared in the *Village Voice*, *New York Magazine*, *Vogue*, the *New York Times*, *Esquire*, the *New York Observer*, the *New York Review of Books*, and *The Nation*.

B. Ruby Rich, a film critic and cultural theorist, is associated with the feminist and queer film movements. Her essays have appeared in the *Village Voice*, the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, *Elle*, *Mirabella*, *The Advocate*, and *Out*. She works with various film festivals around the world and lobbies on behalf of filmmakers.

Film criticism on television is personified by Roger Ebert, the popular critic for the *Chicago Sun-Times* and winner of a Pulitzer Prize for his writings on the cinema. In 1975, Ebert and Gene Siskel paired to host the weekly review show *Opening Soon at a Theater Near You*, the first of its kind on American television; *Opening* eventually became *Sneak Previews* in 1977. Siskel and Ebert ultimately left *Sneak Previews* in 1982 to start *Siskel and Ebert at the Movies*. After Siskel's unexpected death in 1999, critic Richard Roeper joined with Ebert in 2000, and the show's title was changed to *At the Movies with Ebert & Roeper*.

With the advent of the Internet, film criticism is now widely available to anyone with access to the Web. Acclaimed writer, director, producer Richard Schickel, for

example, now writes exclusively for Time.com; and Roger Ebert has his own Web site sponsored by the *Chicago Sun-Times*. “Web logs” (blogs) offer a wealth of information about films written both by professional critics and serious fans. One of the most popular film blogs is GreenCine Daily, which is written primarily by GC editor Aaron Hillis. This blog is connected with GreenCine, an online DVD rent-by-mail service. GreenCine also features a podcast downloadable onto iTunes for those who seek film reviews on-the-go.

Providing readers with a blend of personal reflection and academic observation, several well-established scholar-critics have made the move to the Internet blogosphere, including David Bordwell, professor of Film Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Jonathan Rosenbaum, film critic for the *Chicago Reader* from 1987 to 2008. In addition to these more scholarly blogs, online film journals publish longer critical essays and reviews. *Senses of Cinema*, for example, published quarterly out of Australia, is an online journal devoted to the serious and eclectic discussion of cinema; and *Salon* is an award-winning online news and entertainment Web site. Another Internet film magazine from Australia, *Rogue*, was created in 2003, and is well respected for its writing.

Other Web sites either feature their own reviews or compile offerings created by authors writing on different sites. *Rotten Tomatoes*, for instance, gathers reviews from accredited media outlets and online film societies, providing readers not only with reviews but with ratings characterized by “fresh” or “rotten” tomatoes. *PopMatters*, an international magazine of cultural criticism created in 1999, publishes critical writing on film and other cultural products, such as music, television, books, video games, sports, and theatre. And the Internet Movie Database (IMDB), one of the most valuable Internet film resources, provides readers with boilerplate information and fan synopses and opinions.

See also: Auteur Theory; Ebert, Roger; French New Wave; Truffaut, François; Feminist Film Criticism

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—Jennifer L. Gauthier

FILM EDITING. Film editing is the process of joining together continuous strips of film, called shots, to create scenes, and ultimately assembling the scenes into a finished motion picture. Editing allows filmmakers to manipulate time and space in the film and to connect thematically related ideas, images, and storylines to create a cohesive narrative.

The earliest motion pictures were projections of single, brief events filmed in a continuous take. Audiences of the 1890s were entertained simply by the novelty of moving pictures. For 5 to 25 cents they watched films depicting non-narrative events, such as boxing matches, street scenes, dancing women, and cock fights, in single-viewer, peep-show devices called Kinetoscopes.

In 1896, Thomas Edison's Vitascope became the first commercially successful motion picture projector in the United States. By the early twentieth century, movies' running times increased from under a minute to 10 to 12 minutes—the length of a reel of film. More importantly, filmmakers were starting to experiment with creating simple narratives.

By the early twentieth century, Edwin S. Porter, a director at the Edison Manufacturing Company, had taken narrative films to a new level in the United States. Building on techniques pioneered by French filmmaker Georges Méliès, and British filmmaker Frank Mottershaw, Porter's films featured editing techniques such as dissolving from one image to another, close-ups, and inserting stock footage. Cutting to continuity, another important editing innovation, allowed filmmakers to trim scenes for time while preserving the fluidity of the story.

Porter's 1903 film *The Great Train Robbery* was a milestone in film editing. To tell the story of the bandits' crime and subsequent pursuit, Porter developed the technique of crosscutting: the camera cuts away from one scene of action to another one, and then back again to the first scene, suggesting that the two actions are taking place simultaneously. Porter's innovations in editing took films from short depictions of live events and rigidly staged productions to a fluid, expressive means of conveying a narrative.

Film editing took another quantum leap forward with American filmmaker D. W. Griffith, whose consolidation and expansion of editing techniques have earned him the title "Father of Film." Griffith pioneered the use of editing film to intensify dramatic and emotional impact, a convention known as "classical cutting." Griffith also interwove close-up, medium, and long shots to shift the viewer's point of view within a scene, replacing a linear continuity with a subjective continuity composed of related ideas in connected shots. He also developed conventions of editing meant to make the transitions seamless: the eyeline match, which assumes that when a character looks off-screen, the subsequent shot will show the audience what he or she is looking at; matching action, whereby a cut is masked by the continuity of motion in the scene; and the 180-degree rule, which mandates that the camera be kept on the same side of an imaginary 180-degree line on the stage in order to maintain the same background.

Griffith's masterpiece *Birth of a Nation* (1915) featured many innovative editing techniques. At three hours and 10 minutes, it was America's first epic feature film, and its emotional intensity was maintained through the use of crosscutting between scenes, a variety of camera setups, and varied camera angles. His follow-up, *Intolerance* (1916), was the first feature film to utilize a thematic montage, associating shots based on ideas and disregarding the continuity of time and space.

Griffith's editing innovations changed the way films were produced. Through the use of close-up shots, actors could convey emotion through nuanced expressions rather than simply by gesticulations, thus creating a need for actors with a new, more subtle

set of acting skills. Furthermore, Griffith's method of shooting related shots together paved the way for the era of the high-paid star, as studios could shoot all the star's scenes in a short time and out of sequence to save money.

The advent of sound in movies temporarily undermined the advances made in editing. Sound had to be recorded by microphones hidden on the set while the scene was being filmed, effectively anchoring the action to a single location and requiring scenes to be filmed with no cuts. These problems were eventually resolved with the invention of a soundproof, moveable camera housing, as well as with the development of the ability to dub in sound after filming.

Until the late twentieth century, the editing process entailed taking positive copies of negative filmstrips and literally cutting and pasting sections of film together. Invented in 1924, a device called the Moviola facilitated this process by allowing editors to view individual shots to determine where the best cut points would be. The editor would then make the desired cuts on negative film and make a final contact print.

In 1971, CMX Systems introduced the first nonlinear editing system, a forerunner of the systems that would become commonplace by the 1990s. Nonlinear editing relies on a digital copy of the movie rather than physical filmstrips, enabling editors to access any shot of the movie with ease without harming the integrity of the original. Software is used to create a list of edits and to make changes to the digital source. As movies are increasingly filmed in high-resolution digital format to incorporate computer-generated imagery and theaters shift to digital projection, the use of photographic film in movies is on the wane and will likely disappear altogether.

See also: Edison, Thomas Alva; Eisenstein, Sergei; Griffith, D. W.; Méliès, Georges; New Technologies in Filmmaking; Welles, Orson

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—Erika Holst

FILM NOIR. Although the term is French, film noir is a distinctively American cinematic category. Its most notable examples were produced in Hollywood in the 1940s and 1950s. The dates are conjectural, and many film scholars would argue for the inclusion of films made both before and after that period. Scholarly opinion would also vary on what constitutes the definitive noir style. There would be no disagreement, however, that the most enduring examples of classic film noir, those films now considered definitive, were produced in the period from 1941 to 1955. There is also a general consensus that if a strict chronology needed to be imposed, the first of the *classic* noir



Scene from the 1955 film *Kiss Me Deadly*, directed by Robert Aldrich. Shown is Gaby Rodgers. (Photofest)

films was John Huston's *The Maltese Falcon* (1941), and the last, Robert Aldrich's *Kiss Me Deadly* (1955).

Other films that fit into an expanded noir classification can be termed either "proto-noir," or "neo-noir." Proto-noir would include, for example, Fritz Lang's *M*, made in Germany in 1931, well before film noir had coalesced into a distinctive category, but containing many noir characteristics. Neo-noir applies to films that were made in a later period, and based on scripts that incorporate and imitate Noir characteristics, often as an homage to the genre. Notable examples would include two Raymond Chandler novels: *Farewell My Lovely* (1975), directed by Dick Richards (previously filmed in 1944 by Edward Dmytryk with the title *Murder My Sweet*), and *The Long Goodbye* (1973), directed by Robert Aldrich.

Arthur Penn's *Night Moves* (1975) is a laudable contribution to the genre, and Lawrence Kasdan made his directorial debut with the impressive *Body Heat* (1981). The best of the neo-noir films to date, however, is undoubtedly Roman Polanski's *Chinatown* (1974), for which screenwriter Robert Towne won an Academy Award for Best Original Script.

The term film noir, which means "black" or, more accurately, "dark" film, denotes a motion picture of omnipresent darkness, both literally and psychologically. Notable exceptions notwithstanding, the popular Hollywood films produced in the years prior to 1941 and America's entry into World War II, were characterized by the high-key lighting and luxurious settings of the Fred Astaire-Ginger Rogers musicals, and the cheerful screwball comedies of the 1930s. In 1940, as the forces of Nazi Germany swept across the European continent, the export market for American films was abruptly closed, and they disappeared from European theaters. By 1946, when a backlog of motion pictures began to return to Europe, French critics, in particular, took note of something new and different, a pervasive darkness in both story and visual style. Cineaste Nino Frank is generally credited with being the first to identify such films with the term film noir.

The distinctive “look” of classic noir is largely owing to unique cinematography and creative lighting. A typical noir film is shot in black and white with much of the action taking place in urban settings, at night, on wet streets, deliberately made wet to enhance the dramatic contrast of black-and-white photography. The template for this effective visual contrast was created by legendary cameraman Gregg Toland for a film few if any would place in the category of film noir: Orson Welles’s *Citizen Kane*. Charles Foster Kane (Welles) first meets Susan Alexander (Dorothy Comingore) on a rainy evening in front of a drugstore, but the meeting is far from being as visually dramatic as Toland’s deep-focus *mise-en-scène*. The brilliant chiaroscuro lighting of this definitive shot has been widely imitated, but never surpassed. Shots such as Toland’s in *Citizen Kane* inspired directors and cinematographers to experiment further with the potential of black-and-white photography on the gray scale. A slow-speed film stock, indirect, low-key lighting, and a variety of light bounces were utilized with telling effect, as American films of the ’40s brought black-and-white cinematography to its pinnacle of aesthetic accomplishment. These technical breakthroughs in cinematography were occurring not only in the resource-rich big studios, but in small studio and independent productions as well. In an A-film, such as Abraham Polonsky’s *Force of Evil* (1948), the photography and lighting of George Barnes is truly ingenious, and no less so is the work of cinematographer Louis Gruenberg in Gordon Wiles’s B-film *The Gangster* (1947).

The cinematography in film noir, however, is designed to abet the characteristic mood and tone of the story line. In the typical noir script, there is a pervasive aura of claustrophobia, betrayal, and distrust. The protagonist, most often male, is usually on a quest to solve a mystery or unravel a conspiracy in which he has become unwittingly implicated or involved by actions he has taken; actions retrospectively seen as taken against better judgment. The protagonist may be weak or helpless in some fashion, the victim of malevolent forces against which he or she is ultimately powerless. Particularly effective examples of such protagonists are found in noir films such as Robert Siodmak’s *The Killers* (1946), in which an ex-boxer, played by Burt Lancaster (in his screen debut), passively lies in bed awaiting those who are coming to kill him. In Anatole Litvak’s *Sorry, Wrong Number* (1948), a bedridden Barbara Stanwyck (one of the few female protagonists in noir films) attempts to fend off her impending doom with telephone calls that bring no help. A telephone also figures in the demise of the luckless drifter played by Tom Neal in Edgar G. Ulmer’s *Detour* (1945). In Rudolph Maté’s *D.O.A.* (1950), the hapless Edmond O’Brien tries desperately, throughout the course of the film, to discover why and by whom he has been given a deadly and slow-acting poison.

In other noir films, particularly those that have the widest following, the typical protagonist is neither weak nor helpless, nor is he unduly passive or desperate. He is the existential, self-contained loner, a pragmatist who has long since divested himself of ideals, and has no illusions about the shadowy world in which he makes his living. He is adept at handling himself on either side of the law, toughened by years of dealing with the coarser element of humanity. He lives on the fringe of society in a state of alienation. He has within a core of personal integrity, but it is hardly a guiding principle in his life, and becomes manifest only in moments of crisis. He trusts no one, but is

frequently seduced, and often betrayed, by a woman. Notable examples of this form of noir hero are found in Alan Ladd's performance as politico bodyguard Ed Beaumont in Stuart Heisler's *The Glass Key* (1942), Humphrey Bogart's Sam Spade in John Huston's *The Maltese Falcon* (1941), Ralph Meeker's amoral Mike Hammer in Robert Aldrich's adaptation of the Mickey Spillane novel *Kiss Me Deadly*, and the quintessential exponent of the noir hero, Robert Mitchum's Jeff Bailey in Jacques Tourneur's *Out of the Past* (1947).

A number of film historians find sociopolitical elements at least partly responsible for the dark mood of film noir. The world of the 1940s and early '50s endured the anxiety of a desperate war fought for the survival of Western democracy. Victory for the Allied powers of the west brought the revelation of the ancillary horrors of the war, most notably the Holocaust and the use of nuclear energy as the ultimate weapon capable of destroying all life on earth. The cessation of the war in Europe and the Pacific segued almost immediately into a "cold war" of standoff diplomacy, and an armed conflict in Korea between the Western democracies and the USSR/Communist China alliance. In the film industry, the preliminary Washington hearings held by the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) in 1947 resulted in the black-listing of anyone in the industry who, under oath, would not deny any affiliation with the Communist Party, or who refused to "name names" of individuals whom they suspected of being Communists. First Amendment rights succumbed to widespread paranoia, the fear that Communists were seeking control of the film industry as a means of indoctrinating the American public using subtle forms of propaganda. The years in which film noir flourished correspond with those in which anxiety and despair dominated the minds of many of our best writers and artists.

The degree to which such political turmoil actively helped to shape film noir is hypothetical, but it is clear that the genre owes its inception to a variety of influences that gradually coalesced into a more or less singular creative effort. Among these influences was German expressionism. In the 1930s, Hollywood experienced an influx of European directors, particularly those who had fled the growing repression of Nazi Germany. These directors included many who would later become stalwart figures of the industry, including Fritz Lang, Billy Wilder, Max Ophuls, William Dieterle, Robert Siodmak, and Otto Preminger. Many of these directors began their careers at UFA, the German studio that produced a number of proto-noir films such as Robert Wiene's renowned *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919). The pervasive shadows; oblique, surrealistic camera angles; and contrasting wedges of dark and light (many *painted* in place if the desired lighting could not be achieved) were characteristic of German expressionism, and were gradually assimilated into American film.

In a more distinctively American vein, many of the basic tenets of the dark world of Hollywood noir were derived from what was generally recognized as "pulp" fiction, so called because such fiction was published in small, inexpensive magazines on the cheapest form of coarse, wood pulp paper. It was the venue for the initial appearance of stories and novels written by Dashiell Hammett, James M. Cain, Raymond Chandler, and Cornell Woolrich. Chandler made an even more direct contribution to film noir, sharing the screenwriting credit for *Double Indemnity* (1944) with director Billy Wilder.

Particularly influential were pulp fiction crime stories of a type published in the 1920s and '30s in magazines such as *Black Mask*, where in 1934 Chandler's Philip Marlowe, the central character in two classic noir and three neo-noir films, first appeared. Pulp fiction's primary contribution to film noir was the "hardboiled" detective, private investigators ("private eyes") such as Hammett's Sam Spade and Chandler's Marlowe. Both detectives were memorably portrayed by Humphrey Bogart in the noir classics *The Maltese Falcon* and Howard Hawks's *The Big Sleep* (1946), respectively. Philip Marlowe had previously been creditably portrayed by Dick Powell in Edward Dmytryk's *Murder My Sweet* (1944), an outstanding noir film that constituted Powell's breakaway role from his many screen performances as a song and dance man in Busby Berkeley musicals. James Garner played Philip Marlowe in Paul Bogart's *Marlowe*, a neo-noir effort filmed in 1969, and Elliott Gould reprised the role of Marlowe in Robert Altman's neo-noir *The Long Goodbye* (1973).

Film noir proved to be an enduring form, despite the fact that although hundreds of films fall into the noir genre, a comprehensive and succinct definition that can be commonly agreed on remains elusive. The cinematography of low-key lighting developed and gradually enhanced by those working in the noir medium continued to dominate Hollywood films of many genres, until black-and-white cinematography became completely outmoded. Color photography of the 1940s, primitive by modern standards, had, with a few exceptions such as John Stahl's *Leave Her to Heaven* (1945) and Lewis Allen's *Desert Fury* (1947), been considered too garish and upbeat for the serious and somber mood of the story lines common to noir films, indeed, for any film making a serious statement, and was relegated to travelogues, musicals, and epics. By the late '50s, however, color had come completely into its own. Neo-noir has become an independent genre, although elements of the antecedent form from which it is derived remain clearly recognizable.

See also: Big Sleep, The; Citizen Kane; Double Indemnity; French New Wave; Hard-Boiled Detective Film, The; Maltese Falcon, The

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—Richard C. Keenan

FRENCH NEW WAVE. The French New Wave (*La Nouvelle Vague*) cinematic movement refers to the work of select French filmmakers that appeared between the years of 1958 and 1964. The term "Nouvelle Vague" (literally "new wave") was first used by French journalist Françoise Giroud in his 1957 film-related articles published



Scene from the 1959 French film *Breathless* (aka *À Bout de souffle*), directed by Jean-Luc Godard. Shown (from left) are Jean Seberg and Jean-Paul Belmondo. (Photofest)

in the French weekly news magazine *L'Express*. In 1959, *L'Express* adopted the term in an article on an emerging group of directors who premiered films at the Cannes Film Festival that year. Working under the watchful eye of André Bazin and Jacques Doniol-Valcroze, these young, sometimes brash directors had already begun to establish themselves as original voices in French filmmaking by publishing critical essays in a new journal called *Cahiers du cinéma*.

One of the leading figures of the burgeoning New Wave movement, and a major contributor to *Cahiers du cinéma*, François Truffaut went so far as to suggest that directors, at least good ones, were not just part of the filmmaking process but auteurs, literally “authors” of their films. Representative of this idea of the director as auteur, argued Truffaut and other critics, were French filmmakers such as Jean Vigo, Jean Renoir, and Robert Bresson, and American filmmakers such as John Ford, Howard Hawks, Alfred Hitchcock, Fritz Lang, Nicholas Ray, and Orson Welles. Taking their cue from these

auteurs, New Wave directors such as Truffaut, Jacques Rivette, Jean-Luc Godard, Eric Rohmer, Louis Malle, Jean-Pierre Melville, Agnès Varda, and Claude Chabrol became prominent, and prolific, filmmakers in their own right. Indeed, between 1959 and 1966, the five principal New Wave directors—Truffaut, Godard, Chabrol, Rivette, and Rohmer—completed 32 films. In general, their films were geared toward younger, more intellectually inclined audiences and were radically different from anything the French cinematic community had ever experienced.

Seeking to break free from the ideological and literal boundaries of traditional filmmaking, New Wave directors used the cinematic technology of the time to shift their work outside the studio, shooting their films on location in the streets, buildings, and countrysides of France. Using handheld cameras, faster film stock, and sound and lighting units that were much more mobile than those employed by their predecessors, these directors worked quickly and efficiently. Freed from the logistical constraints of traditional filmmaking, New Wave directors began to experiment and improvise on their shoots. This led to the production of films that had a more casual and natural style, one that reinforced the personal qualities of the work. Further, the films of these directors did not follow traditional editing styles or rules. One of their favored techniques was the “jump cut,” or the insertion of material that did not follow the logic or flow of the narrative. Godard, for instance, often used jump cuts as a way to break up lengthy conversations between characters in the same room. “Long takes”—single extended shots without cuts—and the use of real time were also techniques commonly employed by New Wave filmmakers.

Acting styles also changed. Actors working on New Wave films were often given a storyline and encouraged to improvise their lines to fit within the preestablished plot. In Godard’s *À bout de souffle* (1959), viewers witness actors interrupting and talking over each other, as would be the case when people are conversing in real life. Monologues and voice-overs during montages were frequently used to set the scene or advance plotlines mid-film.

Additionally, French New Wave films changed the way women’s parts were written. Instead of the “leading lady” roles that were typical of Hollywood films at the time, New Wave female characters were often complex and integral to the plot. It should be noted that most of the actors in these films were far from famous before they began working with this group of directors. However, thanks to the success of the New Wave in France, actors such as Brigitte Bardot, Jean-Paul Belmondo, Jean-Pierre Léaud, Corinne Marchand, and Jeanne Moreau gained increasing fame in Europe and ultimately in the United States.

Producing on average two films per year between 1960 and 1966, Godard was, unquestionably, the most prolific of all the major directors of the movement. Many of his films, for example *Le petit soldat* (1963) and *Pierrot le fou* (1965), featured troubled male leads who are in some way existentially unfulfilled and who are searching for something to make their lives better. His films from the 1960s forward are also heavily infused with political themes.

Truffaut was known as much for his film criticism as for his groundbreaking cinematic works (his *Les quatre cent coups* of 1959, for example, won the Grand

Prize at the Cannes Film Festival that year). He was one of the principal critics for (and eventually editor of) *Cahiers*. He was known for being extremely harsh in his reviews, so much so that he was banned from the Cannes Film Festival in 1958. His seminal 1954 article “Une certaine tendance du cinéma français” critiqued the state of French cinema and insulted many of the major filmmakers and producers of the era.

Agnès Varda, the leading female filmmaker of the New Wave, used the skills she acquired as a professional photographer to make visually nuanced, moving films. Her films of the 1960s *Cléo de 5 à 7* (1962) and *Le bonheur* (1969) challenged bourgeois moral codes and made a lasting impression on French cinema thanks to complex, “real” characters, skilled editing, and visually compelling montages. Later in her career, Varda became a renowned documentarian.

Though there is some debate surrounding what exactly should be considered the first New Wave film, most cinema scholars agree that shorts produced in the mid-1950s, such as Jacques Rivette’s *Le coup du berger* (1956) and François Truffaut’s *Les mistons* (1957), constituted the first films of French New Wave Cinema. In 1959, three critical New Wave films emerged: François Truffaut’s *Les quatre cent coups*, Alain Resnais’s *Hiroshima, mon amour*, and Godard’s *À bout de souffle*. These are considered seminal films of the movement.

The French New Wave movement has maintained a lasting influence over international film production. In contemporary film, we see many of the same stylistic techniques and thematic tendencies that were used by New Wave directors like Godard, Rivette, Truffaut, and Chabrol. These techniques include long and continuous takes, jump cuts, natural lighting, improvised dialogue and/or plot, and direct sound recording. Common themes include personal drama (relationships, personal crises, etc.) and character types such as the antihero, loners, as well as antiauthoritarian and marginalized figures. The films of international contemporary directors such as Quentin Tarantino, Wong Kar Wai, Wes Anderson, Jean-Pierre Jeunet, Thomas Vinterberg, and Lars von Trier use many of the same production techniques, themes, and character types seen in French New Wave films of the 1950s and 1960s; a testament to the power and influence of this crucial cinematic movement.

See also: Film Criticism; Film Noir; Truffaut, François

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—Jen Westmoreland Bouchard

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GANGSTER FILM, THE. Crime was one of the first subjects explored in American cinema. Vivid portraits of organized criminals appear in silent-era films like D. W. Griffith's *The Musketeers of Pig Alley* (1912). At the end of the 1920s, however, the advent of sound cinema made it possible to portray realistic machine guns, blaring sirens, screeching tires, and the colorful dialogue of streetwise hoodlums. This technological change came amidst the spread of criminal syndicates during the Prohibition era and the loss of economic opportunities brought on by the Great Depression. Suddenly, conditions were right for exploring a new kind of criminal antihero: the gangster.

Three films launched the gangster genre in the early 1930s, each highlighting a single character who was as tough and ruthless as he was ambitious and stylish. The first was Mervyn LeRoy's *Little Caesar* (1931), starring Edward G. Robinson as Rico Bandello. Loosely based on the life of Al Capone, *Little Caesar* established the pattern of the early gangster film by showing Rico's rapid rise in Chicago's criminal world followed by his inevitable fall. The same pattern appears in William Wellman's *The Public Enemy* (1931), starring James Cagney as the fast-talking, free-swinging Tom Powers. Initially cast in a minor role, Cagney's talent was so obvious that Wellman gave him the lead after viewing some early rushes. The scene where he smashes a grapefruit into the face of a girlfriend (Mae Clarke) is still a landmark portrayal of gangster viciousness. But the most brutal image of the early gangster appears in Howard Hawks's *Scarface* (1932), starring Paul Muni as Tony Camonte, another ersatz Al Capone. The incessant violence, which includes many stylized murders of rivals during Camonte's ascent, is concluded by a prolonged machine gun shootout.

By the mid-1930s, groups like the Catholic Legion of Decency were protesting the gangster genre's glorification of criminals. Despite their tragic endings, gangsters indulged a fantasy of wealth and power: donning expensive suits, cavorting with beautiful women, firing tommy guns, and dying in a blaze of glory. The Hays Office demanded changes, and studios responded by shifting the focus from criminals to cops in films like William Keighley's *G-Men* (1935), which starred Cagney as a sadistic law enforcement officer. Another approach, taken in Michael Curtiz's *Angels with Dirty*



Scene from the 1931 film *Little Caesar*, starring Edward G. Robinson. Directed by Mervyn LeRoy. (Photofest)

Faces (1938), had Cagney again playing a hardened criminal, but paired against his frequent co-star Pat O'Brien playing a heroic priest.

Warner Bros. created the most memorable gangster movies of the 1930s. The studio that pioneered sound cinema had contracts on "tough-guy" stars like Cagney and Humphrey Bogart. Both appeared in Raoul Walsh's *The Roaring Twenties* (1939) as friends whose bootlegging ambitions ultimately lead to betrayal. With its nostalgic sweep of the decade and soundtrack full of period songs, *The Roaring Twenties* closed a chapter on the classic gangster era.

During the 1940s, much of the energy of the gangster's rise and fall plotline was channeled into the stylistics of film noir. Crime films of the World War II era used low-key lighting and voice-over narration to explore the psychological states of damaged protagonists. Rather than the grandly ambitious, headline-grabbing gangster, film noir tended to focus on the petty criminals, shadow-dwelling detectives, and femmes fatale struggling to survive in corrupt and dangerous cities. Still, gangster content often overlapped with noir form to provide interesting results. In Raoul Walsh's *White Heat* (1949) James Cagney, after a 10-year hiatus from gangster roles, played Cody Jarrett, a vulnerable noir antihero with the ambition and volatility of a classic-era gangster. His final shout of "Top of the world, Ma!" before exploding a gas tank he stands atop was a nihilistic scream bridging America's gangster era past to its Cold War future.

Film noir's dark style and darker themes continued to influence gangster films of the 1950s, taking the genre in several different directions. The alienated individual surrounded by corruption was the theme of Fritz Lang's *The Big Heat* (1953), in which Sgt. Bannion (Glenn Ford) is a lone policeman battling powerful gangsters. He pays a high price for taking on the mob, as does Lt. Diamond (Cornel Wilde) in Joseph H. Lewis's *The Big Combo* (1955), which has a similar theme. Other films expressed the futility of human endeavors, highlighting a perfectly planned criminal caper that gradually unravels. John Huston's *The Asphalt Jungle* (1950) and Stanley Kubrick's *The Killing* (1956) are noteworthy examples of this type. Not all was noir in the 1950s, however. Joseph L. Mankiewicz directed one of the few gangster musicals, *Guys and Dolls* (1955), and many biopics were made from the lives of actual gangsters, including Don Siegel's *Baby Face Nelson* (1957), Roger Corman's *Machine Gun Kelly* (1958), and Richard Wilson's *Al Capone* (1959).

The most influential gangster film of the 1960s was Arthur Penn's *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967). Although set in the Depression-era 1930s, *Bonnie and Clyde* spoke to alienated youth during a time of cultural upheaval. The legend of the star-crossed crime duo had been put on-screen several times before, but the naive glamour of Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway captured the spirit of the era like no other couple on the run had. Audiences were completely unprepared for the highly choreographed slaughter at the end, in which cops fire hundreds of machine gun rounds into the couple, setting new standards for graphic movie violence. *Bonnie and Clyde*'s commercial success signaled the dawn of a new gangster era that would open doors for young, independent filmmakers like Francis Ford Coppola and Martin Scorsese.

The Godfather (1972), Coppola's realization of Mario Puzo's best-selling novel, was unlike any gangster film preceding it in terms of its epic scope and artistic aspirations. Placing the gangster at the intersection of new-world American capitalism and old-world family traditions, *The Godfather* mixed the warm rituals of Italian life with the cold brutality of illegal business. Coppola intercuts weddings, baptisms, and family dinners with beatings, betrayals, and assassinations. After Don Corleone (Marlon Brando) is gunned down, his youngest son Michael (Al Pacino) transforms from a college-educated war hero with no interest in his father's business into the undisputed head of the mafia's five families. The movie won an Academy Award for best picture, screenplay, leading actor (Brando), and had three cast members (James Caan, Robert Duvall, and Pacino) competing for best supporting actor. Together with *The Godfather: Part II* (1974), which serves as both prequel and sequel to the original, *The Godfather* is recognized as the artistic pinnacle of the gangster genre.

Eschewing Coppola's flair for epic grandeur, Martin Scorsese used an intimate home-movie style in *Mean Streets* (1973), showing the vulgar humor as well as the petty failures of small-time mobsters in New York's Little Italy. With frequent collaborators Robert De Niro and Joe Pesci, Scorsese returned to the same turf to make *Goodfellas* (1990), which tells the story of penitent "wiseguy" Henry Hill (Ray Liotta) using a tightly integrated pop/rock soundtrack and allegorical links between gangster bravado and American consumerism. The film touched off a flurry of retro-gangster films

in the 1990s, with Quentin Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs* (1992) and *Pulp Fiction* (1994) among the most notable.

Between Scorsese's two gangster classics, Brian De Palma's *Scarface* (1983) remake showed the genre's enduring ability to showcase the stories of immigrant outsiders for whom traffic in illegal substances becomes the sole means of realizing the American Dream. Where the original Tony Camonte was an Italian "rum runner," the remake's Tony Montana (Al Pacino) is a Cuban cocaine dealer. De Palma's *Scarface* also updates the firepower and violence while commenting on the failed drug war and the greed that characterized the Reagan era.

Scarface had a major influence on "gangsta" rappers, who in turn influenced filmmakers like John Singleton. At 24, Singleton had the distinction of being the youngest director ever nominated for an Academy Award. His *Boyz n' the Hood* (1991), like Mario Van Peebles's *New Jack City* (1991), and the Hughes brothers' *Menace II Society* (1993), highlight urban drug culture and the effects of gang violence on African American youth. Gangsta films often featured authentic gangster rappers. The star of Jim Sheridan's *Get Rich or Die Trying* (2005), Curtis "50-Cent" Jackson, took gangsta "street cred" about as far as it could go by surviving after being shot nine times.

The gangster genre continues to evolve, not just in the United States, where it responds to the unique circumstances of different ethnic groups struggling to master the American system, but globally where cinematic versions of Japan's yakuza or Hong Kong's triads are as familiar as Sicilian mafiosi. Even with these developments, the public's fascination with brash capitalists backed by guns has not changed since the 1930s.

See also: Bonnie and Clyde; Coppola, Francis Ford; Film Noir; Godfather Trilogy, The; Hard-Boiled Detective Film, The; Pulp Fiction; Scarface: The Shame of a Nation; Scorsese, Martin

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—Joseph Christopher Schaub

GERMAN EXPRESSIONISM. German expressionist film is commonly identified with the interwar Weimar period (1918–1933). Expressionist films typically challenge bourgeois ideas about nature, power, and human behavior in the industrialized world, and are characterized by experimentation in virtually every element of production: set design, lighting, and plot are intentionally designed to provoke, not simply entertain, audiences. Whereas earlier filmmakers had used the camera to simply record actors' performances, expressionist directors experimented with the new technology's

potential. Irregular camera angles, stark, often asymmetrical set designs, and harsh chiaroscuro lighting, along with a disjointed narrative structure, characterize expressionist films. The ability to record both audio and visual images simultaneously allowed filmmakers to produce a multi-sensory experience, which they used to further the sense of dissonance that characterizes expressionist film.

Although associated—even equated—with Weimar culture, German expressionism was in fact an international movement that spanned political epochs. Many “German” actors, directors, and producers, for example, came from outside Weimar, and certainly performed in an international cinematic community. Similarly, expressionist traits can be seen in German films as early as 1913, and although World War I certainly informed interwar culture, expressionist movies shared the



Scene from the 1922 German film *Dr. Mabuse*, directed by Fritz Lang. (Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

big screen with musicals and other lighthearted genres in the 1920 and 1930s. However, while the latter offered German moviegoers a temporary escape from the stressors of daily life in their war-torn and economically depressed nation, expressionist cinema gave voice to widespread concerns about the frailty of modern industrialized society. As totalitarian governments led Europe into yet another global war, expressionism’s cynicism and emphasis on the subjective nature of reality found ever-broader audiences.

Most influential figures in German expressionist film began their careers in live theater, and were drawn to the technological potential offered by cinematic production. Paul Wegener (1874–1948), for example, was a stage actor who focused on film writing, directing, and acting from about 1920 onward. Hanns Heinz Ewers (1871–1943) similarly crossed genres, having worked previously as a novelist, poet, and art critic before writing his pioneering work, *The Student of Prague* (1913). Actor Robert Wiene (1873–1938) turned to directing and screenwriting after 1910; his *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919), together with F. W. Murnau’s *Nosferatu* (1922), epitomizes the expressionist horror film in Germany. Above all, Fritz Lang (1890–1976) exemplifies the internationalism of German expressionist film artists. Born in Vienna, Lang directed

numerous German films during the 1920s—including *Destiny* (1921), *Dr. Mabuse* (1922), and *Metropolis* (1927)—before emigrating to the United States, where he also earned acclaim as a director of science fiction films and westerns.

The expressionist film movement had a lasting influence both within Germany and internationally. Prior to 1918, film was seen by the German cultural elite as a vulgar, working-class diversion, unworthy of upper-class, educated consumers. By the mid-1920s, however, both Erich Pommer's short-lived Decla Studios and the better-known Universum Film Studios (UFA) were successfully marketing expressionists' cutting-edge cinematic technology and provocative narratives as art, not entertainment. As a result, Germany quickly developed an international reputation for high-quality art films, and the UFA studios outside Berlin attracted world-renowned writers, actors, and directors. This reputation offset anti-German sentiments in other nations, but by the mid-1930s, also attracted the attention of the Nazi regime, which drove numerous expressionist filmmakers into exile. Paradoxically, this facilitated the spread of expressionist techniques, as many continued their careers in Hollywood.

Scholars continue to debate the significance of German expressionist cinema, but most agree on several broad generalizations. Culturally, expressionist films challenged Germany's staid political ideas and conservative social institutions, and resonated with both working-class and intellectual communities. Technologically, the innovations developed and exported by German expressionists informed genres such as American film noir and science fiction. Philosophically, expressionism is sometimes interpreted as the artistic voice of a defeated and demoralized nation, or linked to a German national character that was unprepared for the strains of twentieth-century society. More modestly, others see expressionism as a form of personal—and cultural—introspection, sparked by the anonymity and isolation of modern life. This latter interpretation found widespread resonance after World War II, and continues to shape cinematic production today.

See also: *Metropolis*

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—Kimberly A. Redding

HARD-BOILED DETECTIVE FILM, THE. Though often regarded as a peculiar variant of the film noir genre, “hard-boiled” detective movies may well deserve a genre label all their own. Boasting an iconic hero/antihero whose exploits and ethical conflicts constitute their dramatic focus, hard-boiled detective movies create action narratives that actively resist the undertow of fatalism and amoral passivity that characterizes so much of what historians define as noir. And though they are descended from the same pulp-fiction sources that gave birth to the film noir era, hard-boiled movies often move toward an ironic affirmation of the social contract and of an uncorrupted (and possibly incorruptible) individualism that is recognizably American.

Unlike their more cerebral, drawing-room predecessors, hard-boiled private eyes generally lack the social graces and aristocratic connections of a Sherlock Holmes or an Hercule Poirot. If they have not actually been cashiered from an official position with the district attorney’s office (Raymond Chandler’s Philip Marlowe, for example), then, like Dashiell Hammett’s Sam Spade, they inhabit a moral gray zone where they are trusted by neither the police nor their underworld clients, yet are still able to move about in both worlds. There is more than a hint of amorality—sexual as well as professional—in the hard-boiled “shamus,” and there may even be a whiff of potential criminality in such figures, as well. However, such traits are often balanced out by the presence of a personal code that functions in much the same way that an ethical system would, constraining and validating their behavior at the same time. In *The Maltese Falcon*, for example, Sam Spade speaks for the entire fraternity of private investigators who, like Spade himself, inhabit the margins of the world of law and order when he reflects on the moral and emotional ambiguities of his job:

Listen. This isn’t a damned bit of good. You’ll never understand me, but I’ll try once more and then we’ll give up. Listen. When a man’s partner is killed he’s supposed to do something about it. It doesn’t make any difference what you thought of him. He was your partner and you’re supposed to do something about it. Then it happens we were in the detective business. Well, when one of your organization gets killed it’s bad business to let the killer get away with it. It’s bad all around—bad for that one

organization, bad for every detective everywhere. . . . Don't be too sure I'm as crooked as I'm supposed to be. That kind of reputation might be good business—bringing in high-priced jobs and making it easier to deal with the enemy.

Not exactly a categorical imperative, but still proof of a moral backbone that helps to differentiate the hard-boiled private eye from the shady, and occasionally homicidal, clients with whom he has to work.

Of equal importance, however, is the hard-boiled private eye's lack of social standing, or to put it more explicitly, his disdain for status and social pretension. Perhaps the best example of this peculiar (and for some, morally endearing) trait can be found in the following dialogue between the wealthy and beautiful Vivian Sternwood and an obviously unimpressed Philip Marlowe in Howard Hawks's *The Big Sleep*:

Vivian: You know, I don't see what there is to be cagey about, Mr. Marlowe. And I don't like your manners.

Marlowe: I'm not crazy about yours. I didn't ask to see you. I don't mind if you don't like my manners. I don't like them myself. They're pretty bad. I grieve over them long winter evenings. And I don't mind your ritzing me, or drinking your lunch out of a bottle, but don't waste your time trying to cross-examine me.

Vivian: People don't talk to me like that.

Marlowe: Ohhh.

Vivian: Do you always think you can handle people like, uh, trained seals?

Marlowe: Uh, huh. I usually get away with it, too.

Marlowe's attitude in this scene, and throughout the film, reflects a specifically class-based, outsider's view of the conspicuously affluent clients he depends on for his livelihood, and while such arrogance in the face of money and power makes no sense professionally, it establishes at least one critical sociological truth: Marlowe and his fellow "dicks" are essentially proletarian heroes who have no emotional investment in the survival of the Sternwoods and their kind. The Marlowe of *Farewell, My Lovely* bluntly refers to the upper-class (and invariably indulged) women who pant after him as "rich birches," and his misogyny aside, contempt for the privileged few is a constant in both hard-boiled literature and the films they engender. Crime levels all socioeconomic distinctions here, and at last the law makes no distinction between a well-heeled crook and a penniless one, except that the former pays better and can often manage to elude the long arm of justice, if only temporarily.

Two films from the 1940s best illustrate the character-types and sensibility of hard-boiled cinema: John Huston's *The Maltese Falcon* (1941) and Jacques Tourneur's *Out of the Past* (1947), and each in its way establishes cinematic precedents that later, lesser filmmakers would follow. *The Maltese Falcon*, for one, introduces Humphrey Bogart's paradigmatic tough guy, Sam Spade, to the world in Huston's nearly literal adaptation of Dashiell Hammett's novel. Brash, seemingly cynical, a born risk-taker who will gamble his life to get to the bottom of a mystery, Bogart's hero is also a closet romantic

who understands, as he puts it (paraphrasing Shakespeare's Prospero), "the stuff that dreams are made of." He is quite capable of outwitting a ruthless villain, falling dangerously in love with a femme fatale, and then turning her over to the police to clear himself of suspicion for the murder of his partner. The hierarchy of values in Huston's hard-boiled drama is thus quite clear: professional integrity first, something like personal honor second, and romantic love a very distant third—a striking departure from later soft-boiled crime dramas like Edward Dmytryk's *Murder, My Sweet* (1944) where a much-battered private eye gets the girl in the end.

Out of the Past, like *The Maltese Falcon*, takes its basic plot from a similarly pulpy novel (Daniel Mainwaring's *Build My Gallows High*), but places its ex-private eye protagonist, Jeff Markham, in a far more dangerous and morally compromised situation than anything Sam Spade would have thrown himself into. As Robert Mitchum interprets this role, Markham is basically a decent man, haunted by a shady past that has left him scarred and determined to find a new life and a new identity to go along with it. In true film noir fashion, however, that past catches up with him and drags him back into a world of criminality and multiple betrayals, until the only choice with which he is left is a reasonably honorable death. The seemingly ineluctable nature of Markham's fate gives Tourneur's film a much darker outlook than Huston's—indeed, an almost despairing view of both life and love—but at the same time manages to allow its hero to plumb depths of self-understanding that a less violent and self-destructive denouement would stifle or trivialize. What *Out of the Past* accomplishes, then, is the transformation of a stereotypical gumshoe action-hero into a genuinely tragic figure, an accomplishment that relatively few of its many imitators managed to replicate, either during this decade or in the decades that followed.

See also: *Big Heat, The*; *Big Sleep, The*; *Chinatown*; *Fargo*; *Film Noir*; *Huston, John*; *Maltese Falcon, The*

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—Robert Platzner

HAYS OFFICE AND CENSORSHIP, THE. Concerns over the negative influence of movies on American morals, and calls for censorship, are as old as the film industry itself. By the early twentieth century, local officials, often under pressure from religious groups, created a variety of state and municipal censorship boards that varied widely in their regulatory powers and principles. The effect of this patchwork of policies provided the impetus to develop some sort of national standard; but not until 1930 did the industry adopt the Production Code—popularly known as the Hays Code—that

governed the content of American film for over 30 years. Technically, the Hays Code did not entail formal censorship: compliance remained voluntary and the role of the Production Code Administration (PCA) was, in theory, only advisory, although sanctions carried heavy fines. Implicitly, however, the Code imposed a *de facto* censorship on American filmmaking that was grounded in a religious, specifically Catholic, moral ideology.

Censorship had long been a sticking point in an industry that viewed filmmaking as a form of artistic expression, and thus an activity protected by the free speech clause of the First Amendment. When the Supreme Court, however, ruled unanimously in 1915 that motion pictures were commodities designed principally for entertainment and profit, and thus were subject to commercial regulations that varied from state to state, the industry realized the need to establish its own parameters that would be applicable nationwide. Initial efforts to control content, however, were meager until a series of spectacular scandals rocked Hollywood in the 1920s, underscoring the contentions of critics that “immoral” behavior on-screen could easily translate into depravity off-screen. Thus, the newly created Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA) looked to its first president, a Midwesterner named Will Hays, to restore Hollywood’s tarnished image.

Hays was a devout Presbyterian elder and a determined social conservative, but his 1927 list of 36 “Don’ts and Be Carefuls” lacked any real mechanism for enforcement and was largely ignored. Three years later, he tried again with a more substantial set of guidelines that had been proposed by Fr. Daniel Lord, a Jesuit priest, and Martin Quigley, a Catholic layman who published an industry trade journal. This document, which began with a set of general principles followed by specific violations organized under 12 separate headings, was adopted by the MPPDA as its own Production Code. Still, it would be another four years before the MPPDA created an enforcement agency, the PCA, headed by another Catholic layman named Joseph Ignatius Breen, and imposed a monetary penalty of \$25,000 on any film that was distributed without its seal of approval.

Without doubt, most Americans would have found the substantial involvement of Catholics in the development of the Code and in the administration of the PCA surprising, since Catholicism was still viewed with great suspicion by most Protestants, who held that Catholic doctrines often ran counter to American values. Indeed, the decade of the 1920s would witness both the bitter defeat of the first Catholic candidate for the presidency in 1928, and the rise of the “second” Ku Klux Klan that was as anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic as it was racist. But Catholics had long been involved in issues of movie censorship, and in that same decade, diocesan councils and other Catholic organizations began the practice of rating films according to their moral content. In the same year that Breen was hired to lead the PCA (1934), a new Catholic pressure group, the Legion of Decency, had made its influence felt by organizing a national boycott against offensive films and offending studios. As a devout Catholic familiar with the industry—he and Quigley had collaborated on the filming of the 1926 International Eucharistic Congress held in Chicago—Breen brought to his role as the enforcer of the Code the unequivocal backing of the Legion with its latent but lethal power of public boycott. During his 20 years as the head of the PCA, Breen

edited scripts and screenplays to conform to his own devoutly Catholic reading of the Code, and thus imposed his own moral vision on issues ranging from sexuality to political corruption to social reform.

To be sure, much of the Code reflected conventional values that few Americans would have identified as uniquely Catholic. In always depicting the detrimental consequences of illicit sex or lawless behavior, American films during the Code era reflected a morality that was as bourgeois as it was expressly religious. Rather, the influence of the Code on American attitudes toward Catholics was more subtle. Of Irish heritage, Breen usually objected to the repetition of negative stereotypes, both of Irish and Italian characters, who, if not explicitly depicted as such, were implicitly regarded as Catholic. Further, the Code prohibited negative portrayals of any religion, and forbade ridiculing clerical characters or presenting them as villains. Fearful of unintentionally crossing these lines, cautious directors often hired priests to serve as advisors on the set, or allowed priests who worked with the Legion to recommend script revisions. Little wonder that the figure of the Catholic priest as a personification of moral conscience soon became a staple in films that dealt with controversial issues or problematic characters.

Breen retired from the PCA in 1954 and his successor, Geoffrey Shurlock, amended the Code to reflect changing mores. But the Code remained inflexible in presenting a singular and simplistic moral truth that made no allowances for serious films with adult themes. After United Artists released Otto Preminger's *The Moon is Blue* in 1953 without the MPPDA seal but with no loss of profits, the Code died a slow death and was finally replaced by the ratings system in 1968.

See also: Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA); Religion and Censorship in Film

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—Rodger M. Payne

HOLLYWOOD BLACKLIST, THE. The Hollywood Blacklist was a product of the virulent anticommunism of Cold War America. Hearings by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) began shortly after World War II and continued through the 1950s, resulting in more than 300 screenwriters, directors, actors, and others in the film industry being barred from working in films and television. Despite little or no evidence that accused individuals were affiliated with the Communist Party, many careers were temporarily derailed or permanently ruined.



Lillian Hellman, a playwright and screenwriter with left-leaning politics, was called before the House Un-American Activities Committee. Her refusal to cooperate with the committee caused her to be blacklisted in Hollywood for over a decade. (Library of Congress)

Concern about leftist infiltration into American entertainment had begun in the 1930s, when the Dies Committee investigated charges of communist influence in the New Deal's Federal Theatre Project, ending its funding. It was in those Depression years that left-wing attacks on capitalism and racism resonated with some Americans, including people in the arts and entertainment. During World War II, when the USSR joined the Allies' efforts against Germany and Japan, public attention was focused more on fighting fascism, and Americans could see positive images of Soviet Russia on-screen (as in *Mission to Moscow*, 1943, and *Song of Russia*, 1944). The production of war news and propaganda arose from the notion that films are powerful means of swaying public opinion, and they appeared successful.

By 1945, however, the Cold War was well underway, and fighting communist domination became central to American policy at home and abroad. Now the same potential of films so useful in supporting the war was suspect, especially if it had fallen into the hands of dissidents while no one was watching. Not surprisingly, screenwriters came under the closest scrutiny, but more interesting is the fear that the offscreen politics of directors and actors, besides generally poisoning the production climate, might

seep into the theaters via subtle means. The policing of film content was hardly new—the Hollywood Code created in the 1930s was still in force—but now the federal government added its voice and determination to expose subversive plots.

In this climate, HUAC investigations into communist influence in Hollywood began in October 1947, helping to create the hysteria associated with Joseph McCarthy's crusade. The format and dynamics of these early hearings quickly became standard procedure for the era: witnesses were asked whether they were or had ever been communists; but the response was less important than their willingness to testify, name the names of other suspected communists, and publicly denounce communism. No evidence was needed for someone to be suspected, and one was "guilty" until proven innocent (by naming others). Of more than 40 individuals first called, the majority were "friendly," or compliant with HUAC, but 19 refused to cooperate, a number that eventually shrank to the "unfriendly" Hollywood Ten, convicted of contempt and sentenced to prison terms: screenwriters Alvah Bessie, Lester Cole, Ring Lardner Jr., John Howard Lawson, Albert Maltz, Samuel Ornitz, and Dalton Trumbo; director Edward Dmytryk (who later cooperated); director/screenwriter Herbert Biberman; and producer/screenwriter Robert Adrian Scott.

Additional hearings in 1951–52 generated the bulk of the blacklist, which was then used by the industry on both coasts to control who was hired. In addition, the 1950 publication *Red Channels* listed 151 suspects, and hearings on a smaller scale continued through the decade. Friendly witnesses included actors Lloyd Bridges, Lee J. Cobb, Gary Cooper, Robert Montgomery, Ronald Reagan, and Robert Taylor; studio heads Walt Disney, Louis B. Mayer, and Jack Warner; and director Elia Kazan (whose compliance generated controversy over honoring him in the 1990s). Among the hundreds named were Eddie Albert, Richard Attenborough, Lucille Ball (who testified but satisfied the committee without naming others), Will Geer, Charlie Chaplin, Howard da Silva, Lee Grant, Lillian Hellman, Kim Hunter, Norman Lloyd, Arthur Miller, Zero Mostel, Dorothy Parker, Paul Robeson, and Lionel Stander.

The results were devastating for many on the list. Some changed careers while others left the United States or, if screenwriters, worked under pseudonyms and used "fronts" to sell their scripts (the subject of Woody Allen's 1976 parody, *The Front*). Banning some of the industry's most creative people also affected the era's films, which one blacklist victim termed "void of content" due to the fear of appearing political in any way.

See also: Front, The; HUAC Hearings, The

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—Vicki L. Eaklor

HUAC HEARINGS, THE. The hearings of the House Un-American Activities Committee on communism in Hollywood were pivotal in the history of American film; they were the U.S. government's most direct involvement with the film industry and a public expression of the anticommunism of the mid-twentieth century. The hearings ran from 1947 through 1954 and resulted in the blacklisting of over 300 people, most prominently the Hollywood Ten, a group of "unfriendly" witnesses who refused to testify.

The HUAC hearings involved the convergence of several historical factors in American politics and culture. First, after the 1915 Supreme Court decision in *Mutual Film Corporation v. Industrial Commission of Ohio*, films were no longer protected as free speech, allowing for potential government regulation. Second, Hollywood had a significant organized labor movement, including some organizations with communist ties. Prominent in certain of these organizations were screenwriters, whose late entry into the film industry—after the advent of sound—found them excluded from standing economic agreements. Third, after the birth of the Soviet Union, the United States had become increasingly concerned with communist influence in America. Congress formed multiple committees starting in the 1920s to investigate international political



Ten Hollywood personalities, the "Hollywood Ten," stand with their attorneys on January 9, 1948, outside of a district court after being charged in contempt of Congress for refusing to cooperate with the House Un-American Activities Committee. (AP/Wide World Photos)

threats; one of those committees, that formed by Martin Dies Jr., was the most direct ancestor of the HUAC.

In 1946, Congress formed a committee for the investigation of "Un-American Activities." This committee was chaired by J. Parnell Thomas (R-NJ), with help from John Rankin (D-MS), and it included future president Richard M. Nixon (R-CA). Hollywood communists had been a focus of the Dies Committee in the 1930s, but the focus shifted to European fascism during the buildup to World War II. With the escalating Cold War, attention returned to communism, and the committee once again focused on Hollywood. This was so for two important reasons: first, this postwar committee functioned as an extension of the Dies Committee and its investigations into Hollywood and the Federal Theater Project; second, the investigation was a way of gaining publicity for the committee and its work.

Between 1947 and 1954, HUAC called witnesses from various parts of the film industry to testify regarding communist influence in Hollywood. The committee sought to root out communist propaganda in Hollywood films and started by calling "friendly" witnesses, those who were willing to name names and answer questions. Prominent among these early witnesses were Walt Disney of Disney Studios, Jack Warner of Warner Brothers Studios, and Ronald Reagan, president of the Screen Actors Guild. However, these cooperative witnesses could not give the committee what it wanted—authoritative information on communist influences in Hollywood—and so HUAC called a second round of witnesses. Some of these figures, such as Elia Kazan and Roy Huggins, cooperated, but many, "unfriendly witnesses," did not.

The best known of these unfriendly witnesses were a group of nine screenwriters (Alvah Bessie, Herbert Biberman, Lester Cole, Ring Lardner Jr., John Howard Lawson, Albert Maltz, Sam Ornitz, Robert Adrian Scott, and Dalton Trumbo) and one director (Edward Dmytryk), known collectively as the Hollywood Ten. The Hollywood Ten went before HUAC with intentions of challenging the committee's authority, revealing underlying political agendas, and highlighting the unconstitutional nature of the investigation. However, things did not go well for them. Most were denied the right to read prepared statements before the committee, and their questioning by the committee was often quite hostile. A group of Hollywood professionals, including such prominent figures as Humphrey Bogart, Lauren Bacall, and John Huston, formed the Committee for the First Amendment and came to Washington to testify on behalf of the accused; they were met with hostility by both HUAC and the Hollywood Ten, however, with members of the latter group feeling the efforts of the CFA undermined their strategy.

Ultimately, the Hollywood Ten's refusal to answer questions led to a citation for contempt of Congress on November 24, 1947. While they would later appeal the decision, they were ultimately sentenced to prison terms between six months and a year. Shortly afterwards, a group of Hollywood executives met and declared that the Hollywood Ten would be suspended without pay and that Hollywood would no longer employ communists.

The HUAC hearings on Hollywood continued into the 1950s under the direction of John S. Wood (R-GA), and the names of the Hollywood Ten ultimately became

part of a blacklist, an unofficial list of 324 people who were associated with the Communist Party. This list was assembled by the studios based partially on HUAC testimony. Of these 324 people, an estimated 212 were working in Hollywood and eventually lost their jobs. Some of these people were successful in extending their careers by working under pseudonyms, most prominently Dalton Trumbo, whose screenplay for *The Brave One* (1956), written under the name of Robert Rich, won an Academy Award. However, most on the blacklist were unemployable until the ban was lifted in 1960.

Significantly, studios began to produce films about the HUAC hearings in the 1950s. Some of these films were positive about the committee and its hearings: *Big Jim McLain* (1952), for instance, focused on an agent for the HUAC fighting communists in Hawaii; and Elia Kazan's *On the Waterfront* (1954) was a defense of his own decision to name names. Other films, however, were more critical: *High Noon* (1952) served as an allegory for the experience of the accused, with the sheriff searching for someone to stand with him but finding himself abandoned; and Daniel Taradash's *Storm Center* (1956) told the story of a librarian who was persecuted for refusing to remove a book about communism from her library. The liberal impulses of the latter films survived in small independent films such as *Salt of the Earth* (1954), made by blacklisted artists about labor conflict in a mining town. The film was broadly protested by the American Legion and only saw small distribution, though it remained a favorite on college campuses. It wasn't until the 1970s that Hollywood recovered sufficiently to criticize directly the divisive and destructive effects of the committee with films like *The Way We Were* (1973) and *The Front* (1976), both of which took a critical view of the HUAC hearings and the process of blacklisting.

See also: Hollywood Blacklist, The; Politics and Film; *Way We Were*, The

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—B. Grantham Aldred

INDEPENDENT FILM, THE. With \$250 million in worldwide box-office receipts, *The Blair Witch Project* renewed America's interest in the history and cultural significance of independent filmmaking. In a variety of ways, historians, scholars, and those in the film industry have used the term "independent" for 100 years. Understanding the importance of independent films requires a working definition. Generally, independent filmmaking consists of low-budget projects made by primarily young filmmakers with a unique personal vision away from the pressure of the few major conglomerates that tightly control the film industry (King, 2005). Commonly understood characteristics of independent filmmaking are unique storytelling, technological advancements, and innovative narrative styles that make the landscape rich, variable, and fascinating.

During the "studio era" from the mid-1910s through the late 1940s, independent filmmakers sought to define their place in American culture by breaking away from the Big Five American film companies: Paramount, Loew's (MGM), Twentieth Century-Fox, Warner Bros., and RKO. The Big Five controlled production, distribution, and exhibition of American films, leaving many independent filmmakers marginalized and monopolized by the larger corporate structure. A landmark event occurred in 1919 with the formation of the production-distribution company United Artists, which boasted industry stalwarts Charles Chaplin, Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks Sr., and D. W. Griffith. United Artists was created with the intent of breaking away from the big business and oligopolistic market structure of the Big Five. They became the most prestigious and influential avenue for independent production for the next 30 years. Using scientific audience research and presold properties like Shakespearean plays and best-selling novels as subject matter, United Artists and other independent filmmakers released movies such as *Gone with the Wind* (1939), *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946), and *Duel in the Sun* (1946), which often critically and commercially outperformed films from the larger studios (Tzioumakis, 2006).

The mid-1940s through the late 1960s was a culturally significant period for American independent cinema. The first critical change was the landmark Paramount Decree of 1948 signed by the Big Five, which was a reaction to being found guilty of monopolistic trade practices by the U.S. Supreme Court. Primarily, the decree called

for studios to separate themselves from theater control, which resulted in a seismic upheaval of the structure of the American motion picture industry. Independent filmmakers now had more opportunities to distribute their works on a broader, national level. The second culturally important change in independent films was the emergence of the teenager and youth audience. Seen as a special and like-minded community, not only in age but also in rank, teenagers would spend their disposable income on leisure activities and cultural products, maintaining the lion's share of total box-office receipts. While major studios often ignored this influential audience, independent film companies like American International Pictures produced teen-focused films such as *Rock All Night* (1957) and *The Wild Angels* (1966). The power of these films rested on a rebellious narrative style that spoke directly to the consumer-oriented, carefree lifestyle of teenagers and young adults.

From the late 1960s through the late 1970s, American independent cinema went through numerous changes reflected by the ongoing shifts in social and cultural attitudes in America. Independent film studios created a unique framework of autonomy, but were often dependent on the major studios. Films like *The Graduate* and *Bonnie and Clyde* (both 1967), *Easy Rider* and *Midnight Cowboy* (both 1969) were autonomous because they questioned established Hollywood traditions, targeted a young audience, and catered to racy and controversial subject matter, such as sex, violence, and drugs (Tzioumakis, 2006). However, these groundbreaking films were dependent on major studio assistance for domestic and worldwide distribution.

Independent filmmaking would undergo further changes in the early 1980s, creating the initial framework of what would become today's American contemporary independent cinema. Rising to fill the void left by American International Pictures and other independent production-distribution outfits, studios like Orion, Miramax, and New Line emerged as newly formed major independents. These studios began utilizing technological advancements like the VCR and cable television as well as foreign markets to create varied distribution outlets for consumers. Using their distributive influence, major independents retained larger corporate characteristics, but were allowed to make films catering to more niche audiences. Films such as *The Terminator* (1984), *Dances with Wolves* (1990), and series like *A Nightmare on Elm Street* and *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* allowed the major independents continued viability due not only to box-office success, but home video and foreign revenues as well.

The mid-1990s witnessed American independent cinema firmly establish itself as a relatively distinct category of filmmaking in the broader global market, as well as in public discourse. Leading the charge were New Line and Miramax. They had the financial resources and distribution ability to make niche films with high or low production costs. Major independent productions like *Chasing Amy* (1997) and *Full Frontal* (2002) could be juxtaposed against films like *Gangs of New York* (2002) and the *Spy Kids* trilogy. All of these films were produced by New Line and Miramax, and they varied in production costs, narrative style, and audience, yet were all profitable and crossed over to a wider market.

Moving into the twenty-first century, the Internet has infused new life into independent filmmaking and major independent studios. Mentioned at the outset, *The Blair*

Witch Project (1999) became the juggernaut of Internet marketing and buzz. Made for a reported \$30,000, the film's success was fueled by media and Internet speculation as to whether the story was true or urban legend.

Today, independent filmmakers and studios have the ability to reach a global audience. Utilizing the Internet and proven corporate strategies, studios can efficiently promote, discuss, and market their films to niche as well as crossover markets. Coupling new marketplace savvy with a rich history fueled by the spirit of innovation, storytelling, and technological advancements, independent films are now an institutional staple in American society and will be for years to come.

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—Lucas Calhoun

INTELLECTUAL MONTAGE. Sergei Mikhailovich Eisenstein's view of montage was more radical than Lev Kuleshov's. While Kuleshov believed in shots making links and thus making up a sequence, Eisenstein believed not only in mere juxtaposing of images, but in harsh conflict among those images. According to Eisenstein, montage is "*intellectually* conceived" (Eisenstein, 1992, 154) as opposed to the conventional editing technique advocated by classical narrative films that can only be *descriptive*.

In interaction, shots must collide, creating a shock for the spectator, which was the basis for intellectual montage—one of the five montage techniques Eisenstein distinguished in "Methods of Montage." Intellectual montage can be seen as the elaborate application of the other four techniques: *metric* (cuts based on the number of frames); *rhythmic* (cuts based on time and visual composition); *tonal* (based on the emotional content of a shot); and *overtonal* (the combination of the previous three techniques) (Stam, 2000). In Eisenstein's view, "montage is an idea that arises from the collision of independent shots—shots even opposite to one another," as opposed to the idea of montage as discussed by Kuleshov and Vsevolod Pudovkin, according to which "montage is the means of *unrolling* an idea with the help of single shots" (Eisenstein, 1992) that result in the narrative style of classical Hollywood films.

A simple example of the dynamic process of intellectual montage can be the following thematic conflict: the first shot depicts a poor woman and her undernourished child seated at a table on which there is an empty bowl. There is then a cut to the second shot, which depicts an overweight man with a golden watch and chain stretched over his fat belly. He is seated at a table groaning with food. The rapid juxtaposition of these two sets of images through quick editing creates a collision that, in turn, creates a third set of images in the spectator's mind: that of the oppression of the poor by the rich, which is further translated into political terms in the oppression of the

proletariat by the bourgeoisie. Eisenstein's principle of editing is then a rapid alternation between sets of shots whose significance occurs at the point of their collision.

According to David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, a typical formulaic and narrative device to introduce intellectual montage is the nondiegetic insert: an insertion "of one or more shots depicting space and time unrelated to those of the story events in the film." An example of such an insert is the scene from Eisenstein's 1925 film *Strike*, commemorating the suppression of a 1912 factory strike in Tsarist Russia, in which he constructs a parallel between the bloodbaths of the slaughtering of a bull and that of the workers. As Bordwell and Thompson explain, the image of the bull being slaughtered juxtaposed to the deaths of the workers creates a metaphorical point that lets the spectators deduce that the workers are slaughtered like animals. This is a "third meaning" that none of the shots contain in themselves, and no causal connection exists between them (hence the formula of $1+1=3$ that illustrates the creation of a third, intellectual image by two separate images): it is the filmmaker's use of montage that "leads the audience to create a general concept that links them" (Bordwell and Thompson, 1994).

In Eisenstein's view, the shot—or rather, the "montage cell" (Eisenstein 1992)—is the raw material that filmmakers and spectators use to construct meaning. He thought that the conflict arising in montage "creates a third meaning whose relevance bears directly on the revolutionary history of the Soviet Union" (Hayward, 2000). Montage is, in Eisenstein's view, a manifestation of Marx's dialectical materialism in filmic form: one that grasps the "external events of the world" (Eisenstein, 1992) and thus can be used as a highly effective propaganda tool. The dialectic logic is introduced in visual and thematic levels simultaneously inasmuch as one montage cell (thesis) is put into conflict with another (antithesis), and the result of this conflict is realized in a kind of synthesis in the spectator's mind (Eisenstein, 1992) that triggers social activism.

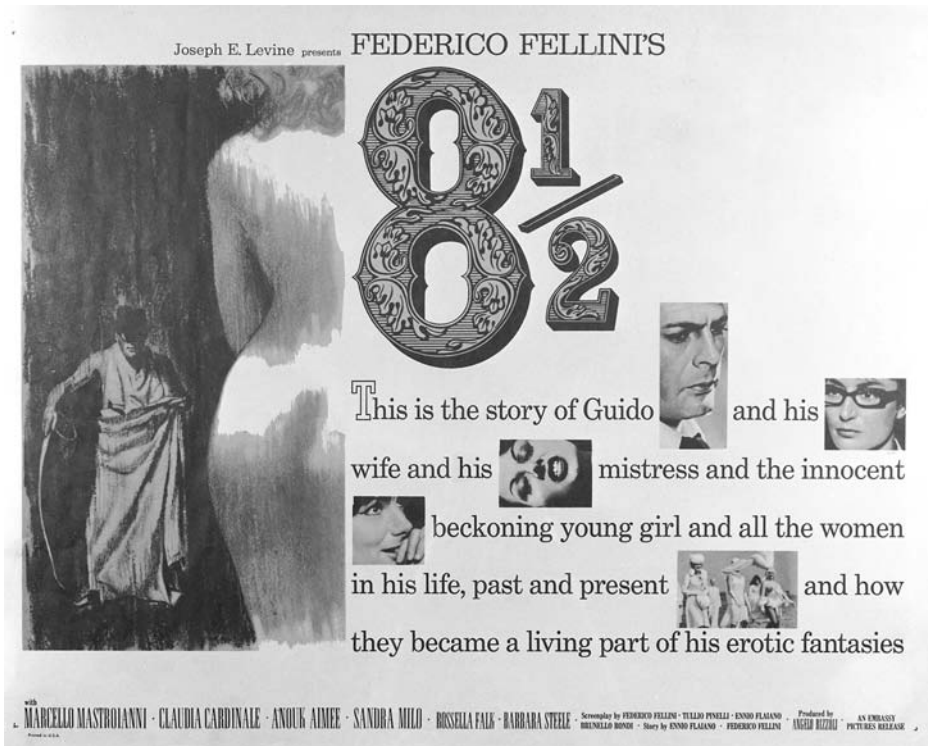
See also: Editing; Eisenstein, Sergei

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—Zoltán Dragon

ITALIAN NEOREALISM. Neorealism is a distinct film movement that originated in Italy, initially addressing local concerns but ultimately influencing, both stylistically and thematically, cinema in France, the United States, and elsewhere. The movement emerged during World War II and continued to develop in postwar Italy. Seeking to



Promotional poster for Federico Fellini's 1963 film *8 1/2*. (Getty Images)

address the brutality of this second great global conflict, writers like Cesare Zavattini and Umberto Barbaro became virtual theorists of a new cinematic style, which they deemed “neo-realist.” Stressing that neorealist films must be characterized by an overtly political message, they focused their efforts on exposing the social and economic misery caused by fascism and Nazism.

Initially, neorealist filmmakers were largely concerned with depicting the despair experienced by those who were subject to Italian fascism and the Nazi occupation of Italy. Necessarily restricted by material constraints, these filmmakers used nonprofessional actors and shot on location in particularly dangerous environments, most notably in Rome. As a result, neorealist films, although narrative works, have an undeniable documentary feel. Consciously blurring the lines between fact and dramatization, neorealist filmmakers sometimes used a narrator to describe the action in their pictures, reinforcing a sense of documentary “objectivity,” while also relying on artistic devices to manipulate the emotions of their viewers.

The movement must be placed against the background of an already active Italian film industry and the fascination that Italian audiences had for the cinema during the fascist era. Conscious of the power of the modern media, Mussolini spurred the growth of Italian cinema by funding construction of large film studios like Cinecittà near Rome. The films Italians embraced before the war were period-piece spectacles

designed to appeal to popular tastes. Although their films were radically different in tone, neorealist directors nevertheless found receptive audiences for their works. Now, though, instead of viewing films about the past, these 1940s audiences were provided with disturbing images of the world in which they lived.

Early signs of this shift in cinematic direction can be detected in the work of Luchino Visconti, whose *Ossessioni* (1942) anticipated neorealism. Although extremely powerful, Visconti's work did not reflect the explicitly political perspective being expressed in the work of writers like Zavattini. Rather, Visconti tended to push political questions to the ideological margins and to focus his films on the squalid banality of the pursuit, by average people, of sex and money.

It may be argued that the neorealist perspective demanded by Zavattini was articulated in the work of directors such as Roberto Rossellini, who, in pictures such as *Rome, Open City* (1945) and *Paisan* (1946), depicted the struggle and desperation of Italian society as the reality of an Allied victory became increasingly apparent. Rossellini used a static camera and little embellishment to define subtly complex scenes in which the mythic figures of the past were replaced by the ordinary people of the present, some of whom reached soaring heights but most of whom simply endured the hopelessness and tragedy forced upon them by an uncaring world.

In his early films, made during the late 1940s and early 1950s, Vittorio De Sica explored the desperate poverty and constant struggle for existence that defined the lives of postwar Italians. Films such as *Shoeshine* (1946), *The Bicycle Thief* (1948), and *Umberto D* (1952) were heralded by critics, fellow filmmakers, and audiences, and ultimately became film classics. Embodying the theoretical goals of neorealist artistic engagement first articulated by writers like Zavattini, works like those by De Sica began to define the movement as essentially left-wing and socialist. Indeed, these films, with their scathing exposés of postwar life lived on Italy's societal margins, were embraced by socialists and used to motivate people to demand change.

As with nineteenth-century social realism, neorealism's power and aesthetic possibilities were undeniable and its adherents grew both in Italy and elsewhere. Nevertheless, its stylistic consistency and strict social message began to seem artistically limiting, even to those who considered themselves neorealist filmmakers, and the movement began to redefine itself. One of the most important directors in moving Italian cinema in a different direction was Federico Fellini. Fellini had worked with Rossellini as a writer, and was clearly influenced by the cinematic style of early neorealist filmmakers. However, in films like *Variety Lights* (1950), *The White Sheik* (1952), and *I Vitelloni* (1953), Fellini began to include personal touches that inspired the audience to think about the psychological nature of the characters. The lives of the filmic characters who existed on the cultural periphery were tenuous and sad, but like one of his cinematic heroes, Charlie Chaplin, Fellini sought to disclose the spiritual depths of these characters. Framing his characters within a landscape of misery and desperation, in the manner of other neorealist directors, Fellini nevertheless suggested that they might experience some sort of religious redemption. Fellini's critics excoriated him, claiming that his pictures were not only overly sentimental but also unfaithful to the fundamentals of neorealist filmmaking. For his part, Fellini ignored his critics and continued to

produce complex films that plumbed the psychological depths of their characters. Maintaining his artistic independence, he dazzled film audiences with works such as *I Notti di Cabiria*, *La Dolce Vita*, and *8 1/2*. By the 1960s, Fellini's films began to have an almost surrealistic feel; and along with directors like Michelangelo Antonioni, he began to define the end of the Italian neorealist movement. Although the movement effectively ended in the 1960s, the works produced by its filmmakers have had a profound effect on the cinematic world.

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—*Alexander Varias*

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JUDAISM AND FILM. Hollywood has played a critical role in shaping popular American conceptions of Judaism. Because most Americans, especially in rural areas, have had little or no personal contact with Jews, for millions the mass-mediated image of the Jew is uniquely authoritative. From its beginnings Jews have held key executive positions within the film industry, which has also employed many Jewish screenwriters and directors. Thus, movies have offered a way for one part of the Jewish community to choose consciously how to represent their tradition to the general public.

Although filmmakers have produced hundreds of films depicting Jews, relatively few have probed in depth the particularities of Jewish belief or rituals. Instead Hollywood has emphasized aspects of immigrant and ethnic identity that are universal enough to appeal to a mass audience composed mostly of Christians. Since the silent era, a central theme has been the Jewish desire for assimilation and upward mobility. Orthodox Judaism has been represented sympathetically in only a handful of movies, and traditionalism invariably loses out to modernism. Jews, Hollywood has always stressed, are as fully American and progressive as any other ethnic group (Erens, 1984; Gabler, 1989).

The production of *Hungry Hearts* by Samuel Goldwyn in 1922 offers an excellent illustration of Americanization at work. The film was based on a collection of autobiographical short stories by Anzia Yezierska, a Russian Jew who had migrated to the United States as a child about 1890, and who had worked for many years in a New York sweatshop. When Goldwyn purchased the rights to her book in 1920 for \$10,000 and brought Yezierska to Hollywood to write for the studio, newspapers hailed her as the ultimate American success story, the "Sweatshop Cinderella" who had climbed "from Hester Street to Hollywood." Yezierska, a socialist who despised the wealthy, soon realized with horror that Goldwyn had no intention of actually producing a movie that conveyed her beliefs. Desiring to address themes such as justice, guilt, and redemption, she soon discovered that Goldwyn wanted exciting plots about immigrants becoming successful Americans, not "Jewish propaganda" films (Birmingham, 1984; Brownlow, 1987).

Some primitive movies blatantly exploited long-entrenched anti-Semitic stereotypes. In *The Fights of Nations* (1907), a segment entitled "Our Hebrew Friends"

depicts a Jewish merchant and his Jewish customer engaged in an argument that soon turns into a physical assault. The two men have the stereotyped features and clothing of vaudeville Jews, with large noses, dark hair, moustaches, and beards. When the police arrive, one Jew pays them off and both men then rejoice together at their cleverness, their argument forgotten. The film also depicts Mexicans, Africans, Spaniards, Scotsmen, and Irishmen engaged in brawls, but only the Jews are shown as resolving their conflict through bribery. *The Fights of Nations* ends with all the characters standing hand in hand below a banner that proclaims "America—Land of the Free" (Erens, 1984).

The following year Biograph released a film scripted by D. W. Griffith, *Old Isaacs, the Pawnbroker* (1908), which retained many of the standard stereotypes but attempted a more positive portrayal of Jewish character. When a sick mother and her daughter are faced with eviction, the little girl tries unsuccessfully to secure a loan from a bank. She then attempts to pawn her doll, hoping to make enough to pay the rent. The tender-hearted old Isaac, with long nose and long beard, takes the little girl home and pays all the family's bills. Biograph advertised the film as a corrective to anti-Semitic slurs on the Jewish race (Erens, 1984).

During the silent era, Biograph, Vitagraph, Thanhouser, Lubin, and Keystone produced many melodramas and comedies about Jews, frequently depicting the challenges of ghetto life. Dramas like *Romance of a Jewess* (1908), *Child of the Ghetto* (1910), *The Broker's Daughter* (1910), *The Ghetto Seamstress* (1910), and *The Girls of the Ghetto* (1910) all highlighted the poverty and poor working conditions that many Jewish workers faced, with women receiving special attention.

Although allusions to Jewish religious practices appear sporadically throughout these films, the earliest movie to focus heavily on Jewish religious life was Kalem Company's *A Passover Miracle* (1914). Working closely with the Bureau of Education of the Jewish Community, NY, which advised Kalem and helped distribute the film, the producers hired leading Jewish actors to play the part of Orthodox Jew Joseph Ratkowitz and his son Sam. Sam is the first of a type of Jewish character that has remained commonplace in cinematic history—the prodigal son. Hoping to leave the ghetto behind, Sam goes off to college to study medicine, supported by his selfless foster sister and sweetheart Lena, who labors in a sweatshop. When the upwardly aspiring youth falls in love with a more stylish stenographer and forgets Lena, the elder Ratkowitz disowns him. Predictably, Sam eventually loses the stenographer and decides to return home, where he arrives on Passover eve in the midst of the Seder. When Lena goes to the door to welcome Elijah into the home, she finds the humbled Sam weeping in the hallway. At first his father refuses to forgive him, but in the end love triumphs and Sam is returned to father and sweetheart, the reconciliation framed by a highly authentic depiction of the Jewish Passover ceremony (Erens, 1984).

This theme of the prodigal Jewish son has surfaced repeatedly, perhaps most notably in the first sound movie, *The Jazz Singer*, which premiered on Yom Kippur Eve, October 6, 1927. *The Jazz Singer* is among the most important movies in history, launching Al Jolson into stardom and establishing Warner Bros. as a major studio. Unlike earlier Jewish films, *The Jazz Singer* was viewed by millions of Americans in theatres across the nation, many of them completely unfamiliar with Jewish life. To aid these viewers,

Warner Bros. distributed a program that explained key Jewish terms and Yiddish phrases.

Like *A Passover Miracle*, the story hinges on conflict between an Orthodox immigrant father and an assimilationist son, but the ending of *The Jazz Singer* differs significantly. Jakie (Jolson) is the talented son of Cantor Rabinowitz, depicted as a devoutly religious man with flowing beard, dark suit, and square black hat who is stubbornly committed to the ancient traditions of Judaism. He demands that Jakie follow him as Cantor, but Jakie despises what he sees as antiquated relics of an Old World that has no meaning for him. He instead becomes a jazz singer, performing in bars and nightclubs, and is disowned by his father. Jakie changes his name to Jack Robin, marries a beautiful gentile woman named Mary, and becomes a successful singer with Broadway prospects. On the night of his Broadway debut, Yom Kippur Eve, he learns that his father is dying and wants him to take his place in the synagogue. Initially refusing, at length he surrenders to “the call of the ages” and leaves the theatre, endangering his career in the process. He reconciles with his dying father, and sings “Kol Nidre” in the synagogue. The film ends a week later with his triumphant return to Broadway, where his mother and wife Mary sit together side by side, watching him perform.

The Jazz Singer respectfully acknowledges Jewish tradition, “the call of the ages,” but the driving theme of generational conflict is resolved with Jack married to a gentile and thoroughly enfolded into the modern secular world. In the end, his traditionalist father dies and his mother comes to the theatre, demonstrating her acceptance of his chosen way of life. *The Jazz Singer* brought to Main Street America themes that were prevalent in Jewish films of the 1920s: the drive to get ahead in America, acceptance of mixed marriage, and the nostalgic but necessary goodbye to old-world tradition. Christian American moviegoers, reading their programs for *The Jazz Singer*, could enjoy learning more about the Jewish roots of their own faith, while at the same time taking comfort in knowing that American Jews were basically just like them.

Jakie's character in some ways did resemble many of Hollywood's Jewish filmmakers and actors, who often changed their names (e.g., Samuel Goldfish became Samuel Goldwyn), and frequently divorced their Jewish wives to remarry gentile women (e.g., Louis B. Mayer, Jack Warner, Harry Cohn, David O. Selznick, Otto Preminger). The late 1920s and 1930s, the era that film transitioned to sound and Hollywood studios grew into behemoths, witnessed intense xenophobia in the United States. With political and social leaders pushing aggressively for immigration restriction and heralding the ideal of the melting pot, Jewish filmmakers quietly downplayed their ethnic and religious identities, cast gentile actors for Jewish parts, rewrote scripts to convert Jewish characters into gentiles, and generally avoided producing stories that focused on distinctively Jewish themes. Although small independent New York companies continued to make Yiddish films up until World War II, after *The Jazz Singer*, Hollywood virtually abandoned Judaism as a theme until the late 1950s (Erens, 1984; Birmingham, 1984).

Perhaps to avoid losing the lucrative German market, Hollywood did not aggressively critique Nazi anti-Semitism until after war broke out. Charlie Chaplin's satirical comedy *The Great Dictator* (1940) was the first major American film to highlight the

plight of Europe's Jews (Erens, 1984; Doneson, 2002). During World War II, Hollywood produced a series of anti-Nazi movies, many of them including Jewish American soldiers among the characters, again reaffirming the message that American society was a successful melting pot. Then, with the heightened public awareness of the Holocaust following the war, two important films sought to probe explicitly the problem of anti-Semitism in the United States: *Crossfire* (1947) and *Gentleman's Agreement* (1947).

Crossfire, a low-budget police thriller, was the brainchild of producer Adrian Scott and director Edward Dmytryk, both gentiles, who wanted to collaborate on a film about the destructive nature of anti-Semitism. They adapted *The Brick Foxhole*, a novel by Richard Brooks about a murdered homosexual, replacing the homosexual victim with a Jew. RKO's head of production, Dore Schary, a devout Jew, gave the proposal his strong support. The plot revolves around two racist veterans who meet the Jewish Samuels at a bar and follow him back to his apartment. In a series of flashbacks the audience watches the two drunken racists become progressively violent in their insults, until finally one of the men murders Samuels.

Crossfire was favorably received by the public, but Jewish reaction to the film was mixed. In prerelease private screenings, conducted with the assistance of the Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai B'rith, psychologists measured the impact of the movie on audience attitudes. Concluding that *Crossfire* did help to change racial attitudes at least temporarily, the Anti-Defamation League gave the movie strong support. However, Elliot Cohen, editor of the American Jewish Committee's magazine *Commentary*, attacked the film as superficial and likely to do more harm than good. Anti-Semites, Cohen argued, would be galvanized by screened depictions of racists who shared their prejudice (Erens, 1984).

Elia Kazan's *Gentleman's Agreement*, released the same year as *Crossfire*, was a far bigger success, garnering three Academy Awards, including Best Picture. Gregory Peck played the role of crusading journalist Schuyler Green, who poses as a Jew in order to study anti-Semitism as an insider. Phil quickly finds out that being a "Jew" changes everything in his life, including his relationship with his fiancée who does not want to hear about the problem of anti-Semitism. Phil experiences overt and subtle discrimination in countless ways, and comes to the realization that all of American society is responsible for the perpetuation of anti-Semitism, not merely a handful of extremists. Unlike *Crossfire*, *Gentleman's Agreement* constituted a frontal assault on American racism.

In raising the issue of anti-Semitism in America, however, both *Crossfire* and *Gentleman's Agreement* conformed to Hollywood's program of assimilation. The films stressed that Jews are Americans and challenged racial prejudice that would deny them their place in the melting pot. Neither movie discussed American Jews as a distinctive ethnic group with beliefs and customs that differed from mainstream culture. Hollywood still avoided portraying the uniqueness of Judaism.

Hollywood treatments of the Holocaust have likewise tended to reflect the universalizing tendencies of the film industry. Perhaps because American society did not directly experience the Holocaust, cinematic representations in the United States have downplayed the specifically Jewish context of the event and instead have used it to portray the sort of inhumanity that Americans and all people of goodwill ought to oppose.

The first major Hollywood treatment of the Holocaust, *The Diary of Anne Frank* (1959), significantly is set not in a concentration camp, but in the attic of a Dutch Christian family. Although the Jewish identity of the Franks is obvious, they are portrayed as a warm and loving family, not unlike middle-class American families, who are hidden away from evildoers by Christian rescuers who are not unlike American Christians who had recently fought against the Nazis in World War II. The screenwriters eliminated numerous references in Anne Frank's diary to distinctively Jewish customs, but tellingly built the climax of the film around a Hanukkah celebration, despite Anne's statement in her diary that her family paid little attention to the holiday. This change reflected the desire of the writers to establish a strong point of contact with mainstream Americans, who could easily associate the Jewish festival with Christmas. The screenwriters for the same reason rejected advice from Los Angeles Rabbi Max Nussbaum, a Holocaust survivor, to have the Franks recite the Hanukkah prayers in Hebrew, believing that American viewers would better identify with the characters if they prayed in English (Doneson, 2002).

The Americanization of Jews in cinema during the 1950s also extended to representations of Old Testament Israel (Mart, 2004). The Biblical epic reached the zenith of its popularity during the decade, in part because it served as an excellent vehicle for Cold War commentary. In movies like *Samson and Delilah* (1949) and *The Ten Commandments* (1956), filmmakers drew clear parallels between ancient Israel's struggles against its enemies and modern America's crusade against atheistic communism. In this fight, Jews and Christians stood together against the forces of paganism and tyranny (Pratt and Reynolds, 1989; Mart, 2004). During the 1950s it became commonplace for American leaders to speak of a common "Judeo-Christian" heritage. Jewish scholar Will Herberg, who taught in a Christian theological seminary, captured the spirit of the era in his best-selling book *Protestant-Catholic-Jew* (1955), in which he argued that all three religions constituted diverse but equally legitimate expressions of a common religion that could be summarized as the American Way of Life (Herberg, 1955). Hollywood filmmakers faithfully reflected this ecumenical spirit.

During the 1950s, a host of Jewish authors rose to prominence in the American literary scene, including Herman Wouk, Norman Mailer, Leon Uris, Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth. These authors affirmed their identity as Americans, yet also insisted on the need for American Jews to claim their distinctive heritage and to live apart from the mainstream. Ethnic pride was beginning to reawaken in other minority communities at the same time, setting the stage for what in the 1960s became a widespread rejection of the melting pot and a growing market for ethnic products of all sorts. Within this context, the 1960s witnessed a renaissance in Jewish films that lasted a generation (Erens, 1984).

Jewish directors Mel Brooks and Woody Allen made a string of hit comedies that often incorporated Jewish themes. Barbra Streisand achieved superstardom playing explicitly Jewish roles. Popular novels and Broadway plays by Jewish writers were adapted for film, including the hit musical *Fiddler on the Roof* (1971) and Philip Roth's best sellers *Goodbye Columbus* (1969) and *Portnoy's Complaint* (1972). Although Main

Street America enthusiastically embraced these movies, some Jewish leaders expressed concern that too many Jewish directors were engaging in a form of self-hatred that played into anti-Semitic impulses within society. Many movies of the 1970s and 1980s seemed to focus on stereotyped Jewish characters, such as the Jewish Princess, the suffocating Jewish mother, and the neurotic Jewish intellectual. Few presented distinctively Jewish beliefs and customs in a serious and respectful light (Erens, 1984).

One important exception is *The Chosen* (1982), directed by Jeremy Kagan, which offers arguably the most sensitive and sympathetic portrayal of Orthodox Judaism in the history of American cinema. Adapted from a novel by Chaim Potok, *The Chosen* is unique in being entirely set within a Jewish American world. The story probes the friendship between two Jewish boys growing up in World War II-era Brooklyn, Reuven Malter (Barry Miller) and Danny Saunders (Robby Benson), whose fathers represent two different expressions of Jewish belief and practice. Danny's father (Rod Steiger) is a Hasidic rabbi, a *tzaddik*, who believes that there must be no Jewish state without the Messiah. Reuven's father (Maximilian Schell) is a secular scholar and passionate Zionist who works tirelessly for the cause of Israel. *The Chosen* sympathetically examines both points of view as it unfolds the deepening friendship between the sons and the challenges that their friendship generates for their fathers.

Kagan, wanting *The Chosen* to be as visually accurate as possible, enlisted the help of Lubavitcher Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson on many aspects of the set, costumes, and script. For the first time in American cinema audiences saw Hasidic family life and religious worship portrayed in detail and with great respect. Breaking with generations of precedent, Kagan's film allows his characters to be fully part of American life and at the same time fully committed to their distinctively Jewish communities. *Yentl* (1983), an adaptation of a story by Isaac Bashevis Singer that stars Barbra Streisand as a young girl who longs to study Talmud, also portrayed Jewish Orthodoxy with great sympathy, but unlike *The Chosen* was a fantasy set in the Old World. To date, *The Chosen* stands alone in its realistic depiction of American Jewish life and thought (Miles, 1997).

See also: Religion and Censorship in Film; Religion and Nationalism in Film

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—James Rohrer

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KULESHOV EFFECT, THE. The “Kuleshov effect” refers to an experiment conducted in the 1910s by Lev Vladimirovich Kuleshov, who sought to demonstrate the significance of montage in filmmaking. The aim of the experiment was to show that editing could engender emotions and associations in the spectator that went far beyond the content of individual shots.

For Kuleshov and other Soviet montage theorists, this technique had “become the indisputable axiom on which the worldwide culture of the cinema has been built.” They insisted on the idea that the filmic shot, as the basic element of the film, had no “intrinsic meaning prior to its placement within a montage structure.” A shot’s meaning arose only in its relation to other shots in the same sequence. While the particular views on montage among Soviet filmmakers differed, they agreed that what distinguished the cinema from other arts was its capacity of the montage to organize disjointed fragments into meaningful, rhythmical sequence (Stam, 2000).

Kuleshov’s principle was that if each shot is like a building block and derives its meaning from its context (that is, the shots placed around it), then if the context of the shot is changed by placing it in a different sequence, the whole meaning of the shot and the sequence changes. In the experiment, Kuleshov juxtaposed several shots taken from different pieces of films, which he then edited into a sequence. He used one close-up still shot of the expressionless face of Ivan Mozzhukhin (a Tsarist matinee actor) and juxtaposed it to three other, completely different shots: a plate of soup; a dead woman in her coffin; and a child playing. The effect of this juxtaposition for the spectator was that the actor’s image, which remained the same in each sequence, was said by the viewer to express hunger, sadness, or joy depending on its pairing with either the shot of the soup, the dead woman, or the child. What this demonstrated, suggested Kuleshov, was that it was film technique, montage, rather than “reality” that generated the emotional response of the spectators.

Kuleshov and his colleagues were forced to use preexisting shots and pieces of existing film sequences for their experiments, as after the Revolution of 1917, virtually no film stock was available to them, nor were there many professionals who could assist them in developing the new film industry (Kepley, 1991). While Kuleshov is usually

credited as the inventor of Soviet montage, he used the ideas of Vladimir Gardin “who (in 1919)—basing his ideas on this economic necessity of re-editing—advocated montage as a fundamental practice of a new film aesthetics” (Hayward, 2000). The montage technique reflected the revolutionary atmosphere of the age in formal terms, but was pushed entirely to the background during the 1930s, with the ideological shift that came with the reign of Joseph Stalin.

See also: Editing

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—Zoltán Dragon

MALE GAZE, THE. The “male gaze” is a phrase coined by Laura Mulvey in her seminal article “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” originally published in the British film journal *Screen* in 1975. One of the most important texts of psychoanalytic feminist film criticism, this article has greatly influenced both film and media studies theorists. In “Visual Pleasure,” Mulvey argues that a new mode of making and interpreting films is necessary because film audiences—both male and female—view cinematic images through a male gaze, unconsciously identifying with a (white) heterosexual, male perspective and conforming to the patriarchal ideology that defines classical narrative films and acts to objectify women.

Mulvey claims that visual pleasure is the key to our fascination with the movies; indeed, she argues, our unrelenting desire for visual pleasure is the very thing that insures the success of the dominant narrative cinema. According to Mulvey, filmmakers—mostly male—manipulate cinematic images in order to induce erotic ways of watching. Thus, in classical narrative cinema the man is the bearer of the gaze while the woman appears as the object of this active gaze. Glamorously sexualized, the woman provides erotic visual pleasure for male viewers, but also reminds them of the threat of castration (an idea first posited by Freud and later elaborated on by French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan). The dominant narrative cinema, suggests Mulvey, subtly codes filmic sexual elements, building on the voyeuristic fantasies of the spectator and presenting viewers with an illusory world wherein pleasure in looking is split between the dominant role of the active participant (the man), who is endowed with the male gaze, and the submissive position of the passive object (the woman), who is gazed at.

Mulvey focuses on three different ways in which the images of women are associated with cinema, which she calls “looks.” These looks, says Mulvey, express different aspects of the male gaze. The first look is produced by the camera and reflects conventional recording practices that place women at the center of traditional filmic expressions of pleasure. In this context, women become the focus of scopophilic drives (meaning “pleasure in looking,” the term scopophilia was coined by Freud, who distinguished between active scopophilia, or voyeurism, and passive pleasure, or exhibitionism). Women in films are presented as exhibitionistic or pseudo-narcissistic objects,

coded for strong erotic impact, that provide visual pleasure for the voyeuristic spectator. This potential for impact, Mulvey's notion of "to-be-looked-at-ness," is strongly connected to the concepts of the gaze and the look. Mulvey uses these two concepts interchangeably; for her, both represent an intentional directing of vision toward a body on display. The second of the three looks, as Mulvey defines it, is associated with the way spectators are conditioned to watch the iconography of the final product. The notion of to-be-looked-at-ness is also related to the third look, which involves the way characters look at each other within the screen story. Mulvey suggests that the conventions of narrative film subordinate the first two looks to the third so that the spectator forgets about the presence of the manipulative camera; the viewer therefore easily identifies with a specific character in the film and is effectively influenced by how and what the story conveys.

In order to achieve an authentic image of women based on sexual balance and empirical reality, feminist theorists envisage a counter-cinema that aims to break apart the monolithic accumulation of traditional film conventions and to abolish the male gaze by freeing the look of the camera in order to liberate the look of the audience. The goal of counter-cinema, then, is to destroy the visual pleasure evoked by the false image of the filmic woman. Mulvey claims that revisionary filmmakers must disengage the agency of the male gaze by implementing an alternative cinematic praxis. She put her theory into practice, directing and producing, with Peter Wollen, *Riddles of the Sphinx* (1977), an experimental work in which panoramic shots were used—as opposed to the traditional 180-degree shots used in mainstream filmmaking—to avoid the implications of the male gaze. Mulvey and Wollen employed the documentary style with intertitles and various points of view, and disrupted the narrative flow of the events throughout the 13 sections of the film in order to obstruct visual pleasure and unsettle the viewer's experience.

Mulvey went on to write a sequel to "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." Entitled "Afterthoughts on 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' Inspired by King Vidor's *Duel in the Sun* (1946)," the article was published in *Framework* in 1981. Although it continues to explore the concept of the male gaze and to maintain Mulvey's previous critical position, "Afterthoughts" suggests the possibility of a female spectator who is able to break open the masculine framework of patriarchal cinema, and in so doing, to experience a sense of control over the filmic world that identification with the protagonist provides.

See also: Feminist Film Criticism; Mulvey, Laura; Women in Film

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—Réka M. Cristian

MELODRAMA, THE. If in life it is difficult to distinguish the good guys from the bad, in melodrama, the distinction is clear. According to film scholar Linda Williams, the function of melodrama is to orchestrate moral legibility. Virtue is made obvious, *visible*, in scenarios of pathos and action. Characters suffer, evoking our tears, and this suffering justifies subsequent action, which thrills us. The dialectic of pathos and action, tears and thrills, is melodrama's essential feature, as evidenced in films ranging from D. W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915) to James Cameron's *Titanic* (1997).

In *Birth of a Nation*, set during and after the American Civil War, alternating scenes of pathos and action are designed to "birth" a white supremacist nation made up of white victim-heroes and African American villains. In one scene, a typical example of the "last-minute rescue" for which Griffith is renowned, Griffith intercuts between three lines of action, shortening each successive sequence of shots in order to increase the speed of the chase until the lines converge toward a thrilling climax. Little Sister (Mae Marsh), a morally legible character, a Southern belle representing white virtue and innocence, cavorts in the woods while making her way to a spring to fetch water. A Northern renegade, the villainous Gus (Walter Long, in blackface) suddenly appears and demands her hand in marriage. Mortified by the black man's proposal, Little Sister flees, initiating one line of action that Griffith intercuts with a second—Gus, in hot



Scene of debauchery in an opium den from the film *Broken Blossoms, or The Yellow Man and the Girl*, directed by D. W. Griffith for United Artists. (Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

pursuit. Meanwhile, back at the plantation, white hero Ben Cameron (Henry B. Walthall), a colonel in the Confederate army, learns that Little Sister has entered the woods alone and, concerned for her safety, sets out in search of her, initiating a third line of action. Will the hero arrive in the nick of time to rescue Little Sister, or will he be too late? Williams's argument about the dialectic of pathos and action in melodrama would demand that the thrills Griffith creates by intercutting between multiple lines of action be answered with a paroxysm of pathos. This is precisely what happens. Desperate to escape the clutches of the evil Gus, Little Sister jumps off a cliff, preserving her honor upon pain of death. Arriving too late to save her, Ben gathers her in his arms and holds her as the life drains from her broken body. The tears that accompany such a pathetic tableau are, for Williams, "proof of a virtue that, at another point in the narrative, can give moral authority to action" (32). Ben subsequently leads members of the Ku Klux Klan on a "morally justified" murderous rampage against Gus and other African American characters in the film.

In melodrama, virtue and villainy are figured by characters in ways that accord with the ideologies of race and gender dominant in society at the time the film is produced. *Birth of a Nation* features a white man as the hero, a black man as the villain, and a white girl as the innocent victim. The film was a catalyst for gangs of whites to attack blacks and for the reemergence of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s.

In *Broken Blossoms*, a film Griffith made four years after *Birth of a Nation*, the hero is a Chinese man, an immigrant to the West (the so-called "Yellow Man," played by white actor Richard Barthelmess), the villain is a white man, an alcoholic prizefighter, Battling Burrows (Donald Crisp), and the innocent victim is, once again, a white girl, Battling's abused daughter Lucy (Lillian Gish). The film is set in London, in the poverty-stricken Limehouse district, but was released during a period of strong anti-Chinese feeling in the United States, occasioned by fear of Chinese immigration (a fear known as the Yellow Peril). In portraying the Yellow Man as the hero, Griffith intended to promote a message of tolerance. The film generates a great deal of pathos out of the social oppression experienced by the Yellow Man as an Asian immigrant in a majority white society, and by Lucy, whose options as a poor young woman in a male-dominated society are limited to self-sacrificing motherhood or prostitution. Visually, the two characters are matched in gesture and demeanor, helpless creatures in a hostile world.

After a vicious beating by her father, Lucy collapses on the doorstep of the shop owned by the Yellow Man. He takes her in and cares for her, treating her like a princess, making her up like a little Asian doll. A romance blossoms between them but is doomed from the start. A happy ending to the story of an interracial romance between an Asian man and a young white woman is not possible in 1919 America, given the ideologies of gender, race, and sexuality. The situation can only be resolved with the deaths of both characters.

A thrilling but failed last-minute rescue precedes the pathetic deaths of Lucy and the Yellow Man. Desperate to escape her father's cruel abuses, Lucy hides in a closet. The villainous Battling Burrows takes a hatchet to the closet door, breaks through it, and proceeds to whip Lucy. Typical of melodrama, the disparity between the brutality of the villain and the vulnerability of the victim is extreme. This is not a fair fight. Our

tears are mixed with feelings of outrage at the injustice of this situation. Shots of Batling whipping Lucy are intercut with shots of the Yellow Man racing to the rescue. Unfortunately, the Yellow Man arrives too late to save Lucy, further encouraging our tears. A final showdown between the hero and villain, another unfair fight, culminates in their mutual deaths, compounding our feelings of pathos and moral indignation.

In melodrama, according to Robert Kolker, “repressed sexuality is a standard starting point, liberated sexuality its apparent goal, moderated sexuality its favored closure” (239). The liberation of desire is central to the production of pleasure in melodrama, but as we have seen, it can also pose problems from an ideological standpoint when the object of desire is somehow “inappropriate” given the values of the society. In *Broken Blossoms*, the “problem” is interracial romance, which cannot be tolerated in 1919 America. In *All That Heaven Allows* (Douglas Sirk, 1955), the “problem” is class and age difference—Cary (Jane Wyman), an upper-middle-class widow, falls in love with Ron (Rock Hudson), a younger man, her gardener, who is of a lower-class standing. In *Now, Voyager* (Irving Rapper, 1942), Charlotte (Bette Davis) is oppressed by a controlling mother but liberated sexually when she meets Jerry (Paul Henreid) on a vacation cruise. The “problem” is that Jerry is a married man. The pattern in melodrama is to negotiate a solution to the problem that satisfies the dominant ideologies of the society at the time the film is made. Female sexual desire, in particular, is often redirected into maternal love, which is considered more socially acceptable for women. In *Now, Voyager*, once Charlotte’s desire for Jerry is acknowledged as a problem, she abandons the possibility of a sexual relationship with him and adopts the more socially acceptable role as mother-substitute for his emotionally troubled daughter. A similar displacement occurs in *All That Heaven Allows*, as Cary adopts a maternal rather than sexual attitude toward Ron in the wake of his accident.

James Cameron’s *Titanic* is set in 1912 but has much to say about the values of American society today, especially regarding gender, class, and race. As young Rose, her fiancé Cal, and her mother Ruth board the ship, a heavenly white light shines down upon them. They are the blessed, the wealthy, the virtuous, rising above the less privileged masses clamoring on the boardwalk below. The whole scene is suffused with nostalgia for an America that once was, despite its class disparities. Rose’s “experience of it”—of *Titanic* and, by analogy, of America—is “somewhat different,” however. “It was a ship of dreams, to everyone else,” she narrates, “but to me, it was a slave ship, taking me back to America in chains. Outwardly, I was everything a well brought up girl should be. Inside, I was screaming.”

That Rose invokes the notion of a “slave ship” in order to express her feelings about gender oppression is in keeping with Williams’s observations about recognizing virtue in melodrama. In the American tradition, at least, white characters sometimes appropriate the virtue associated with the suffering of black slaves. In *Gone with the Wind*, for example, Scarlett’s virtue is partially located in her connection to the land—not Tara as slave-owning plantation but as “Terra,” as dirt worked by slaves—and is transacted in those moments in which she is “doubled” with slaves, including the house slave Prissy and the field slave Sam. Like Scarlett, Rose in *Titanic* momentarily adopts a kind of “metaphorical blackface” by way of bolstering her own moral legitimacy, which is actually located in gender rather than race oppression.

Rose's oppression as an upper-class woman versus Jack's freedom as a working-class man is the central binary opposition in *Titanic*. Whereas she boards the Titanic "in chains," "screaming" inside, Jack pronounces himself one of the "luckiest sons of bitches in the world," having won his ticket in a poker game just five minutes prior. One scene in particular captures the sense of freedom that Jack has and Rose wants. Jack, along with Fabrizio, a friend from steerage, climbs up on the railings in the bow of the ship in order to experience more fully the exhilaration of speed and movement as the Titanic sets out for America, full steam ahead. As pistons engage, dolphins leap, and heavily synthesized music swells, Fabrizio, the hopeful immigrant, shouts excitedly that he can "see the Statue of Liberty already," while Jack throws his arms open wide and declares himself "the king of the world." This is a sensation scene, designed less for the purposes of advancing the narrative than to evoke the feelings associated with being alive—or, to be more specific, with being a male body in the world. The extent to which that body might be oppressed or trapped by virtue of its class status is for the most part elided in the film. Jack is not "rowing with the slaves down below," contrary to his joking aside to Rose—yet another instance of "metaphorical blackface." He is an artist, a "tumbleweed" who revels in "waking up in the morning not knowing what's going to happen, who I'm going to meet, where I'm going to wind up."

Contrary to logical expectation, then, class oppression is not located with working-class Jack but with aristocratic Rose and the constraints of society on the "upper deck." In displacing the experience of class oppression from Jack to Rose, the film is able to qualify Rose's experience of gender oppression as specific to her membership in the upper class. This is confirmed in two scenes that contrast the formality of dinner in first class with the "real party" in steerage. The first-class dinner is a regimented affair that has Rose predicting to Jack what will happen next, and that culminates with the ritual exclusion of women from matters of importance as the men retreat for brandy and cigars. Children are nowhere to be seen. The party in steerage, on the other hand, engages men, women, and children together in a chaotic, exhilarating dance. Women participate in games and guzzle beer right alongside the men. Rose may feel oppressed as a woman, but there is no evidence to suggest that the working-class and immigrant women in steerage feel the same way. The implication is that gender oppression will disappear along with the stuffy old-world, aristocratic society that supports it. Whether this is indeed the case is left for contemporary viewers of the film to ponder.

See also: *Birth of a Nation*, *The*; *Gone with the Wind*; Griffith, D. W.

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—Carol Donelan

METHOD ACTING. The Method, especially with regard to cinematic acting, typically refers to a school of training associated with Lee Strasberg (1901–1982). Originally an acting style in the realist tradition of American theater, the Method proved amenable to Hollywood films, and rose to prominence in the 1950s. It was devised as a strategy for achieving cinematic and performative realism through techniques thought to heighten the illusion of seamless between actor and character.

Strasberg's theory is rooted in the teachings of legendary Russian theater director and founder of the Moscow Art Theater, Constantin Stanislavsky (1863–1938), which aimed at psychological realism and differed from the more gestural acting styles dominating theater in Europe at the turn of the twentieth century. Stanislavsky recommended players take an intellectual and imaginative approach to their roles, interpreting the script in detail in order to posit clear objectives for each of their character's actions. Strasberg's Method differs with respect to the actor's experience. It focuses on the actor's emotions, which are to be derived from personal experiences, memories, and the subconscious. Thus, Strasberg concentrates heavily on Stanislavsky's notion of "affective memory" (or "sense memory," as it is sometimes called). Strasberg's training intends to develop the actors' ability to recall sensations and emotions from their own lives, enabling them to recreate "real" experiences during a performance, which will, in turn, increase the spectator's impression of realism. In this sense, a major aim for Strasberg was for the art of acting to function therapeutically for the actor, who achieves psychological freedom by working through past traumas, breaking down inhibitions, and finding inner truths.

Strasberg first began developing his Method as the co-founder of the Group Theater (with Harold Clurman and Cheryl Crawford) in New York in 1931. In 1937, Strasberg left the Group after a falling out with another teacher, Stella Adler, over his commitment to affective memory. Then, in 1948, he accepted a position at the Actors Studio, a seminal institution founded by Crawford and Group Theater alumni Elia Kazan and Robert Lewis. Strasberg soon became the sole teacher and artistic director of the Actors Studio, and it was there that he continued to develop the Method, working on ways of theatricalizing his students' inner discoveries and experiences. Besides memory work, other techniques used in training and rehearsal foster improvisation, relaxation, and attending to the handling of objects as a tool for indicating characters' repressed feelings.

During the 1950s, the Method became widely celebrated on stage and screen; perhaps its attention to memory, the private life of emotion, and personal exploration appealed to postwar America (which in many ways turned away from explicitly social and political matters). Largely due to the idea that the Method celebrated the individual, it was touted as uniquely American. The actor was believed to be playing "herself," and so, the Method privileged identity. The Method's stress on an actor's personal history remains controversial in theories of acting, for it suggests that actors manifest themselves in their performances, which, in turn, means that the roles they play are always, and in an important sense, themselves. Interestingly, it may be this fusion of actor and character that allowed the Method to transition to Hollywood, whose star system, after all, classically invited such equation.

The cinematic actors most associated with the Method are Marlon Brando, Montgomery Clift, and James Dean. To a greater and lesser extent, each of these stars emerged as emblems of masculine rebellion in the 1950s, a fact that resonates with the technique's emphasis on the individual (and, by extension, individuation). Ironically, these actors were not principally trained by Strasberg or the Actors Studio. Kazan, though, did direct *On the Waterfront* (1954), and Brando's performance in that film is regarded as the prototypical cinematic Method performance. Other influential students of the Actors Studio under Strasberg's tutelage are Ellen Burstyn, Robert De Niro, Jane Fonda, Dustin Hoffman, the late Paul Newman, Jack Nicholson, and Al Pacino.

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—Kyle Stevens

MOTION PICTURE PRODUCERS AND DISTRIBUTORS OF AMERICA (MPPDA). The Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA) was founded in 1922 in order to advance the interests of the film industry, in particular with regard to censorship and distribution legislation both in the United States and abroad.

It was preceded by many other trade associations, including the Motion Picture Patents Company (1908); the Independent Film Protective Association (1909); the National Independent Moving Picture Alliance (1909); the Motion Picture League of America (1911); and the Film Boards of Trade (1912). These groups sought to standardize industry practices, integrate new technologies of film production and distribution, and fight censorship legislation to advance the industry's business interests.

The main reason for the founding of the MPPDA was the scattershot forms of censorship imposed on the industry by state and local officials. In 1910, an organization called the National Board of Censorship was set up with the cooperation and participation of civic groups, industry representatives, and a citizen watch group called the People's Institute. Yet state and local laws continued to be at variance with each other. Moreover, there was a series of scandals that outraged the public about the morality of the film industry. These included the murder of director William Desmond, the divorce of Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks, and the death by overdose of actor Wallace Reid. Most infamously, in 1921, the actor Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle was accused of raping and

murdering a young aspiring actress. Public outrage over the immorality of Hollywood gave rise to even more demands for reform by civic and religious groups. At the same time, the industry was facing a backlash in Europe because of the dominance of Hollywood films over indigenous productions. The work of the MPPDA, therefore, was to deal with censorship issues at home and attempts at restricting trade abroad.

The first president of the MPPDA was Will H. Hays. Hays was a lawyer, former chairman of the Republican National Committee, adviser in the presidential campaign of Warren Harding, and postmaster general. His political experience and connections were crucial to making him an effective liaison among lawmakers, civic groups, and the industry. By maintaining his headquarters in New York rather than Los Angeles, he projected an image of neutrality with groups critical of the film industry, such as the Boy Scouts of America and the National Council of Catholic Women.

Hays introduced the Production Code in 1930, a document that provided guidelines for censorship. Studios were not consistently compliant with the guidelines, further raising the ire of civic groups such as the Catholic Church's Legion of Decency. In 1934, Hays appointed Joseph Breen to enforce the compliance of the Code, after which studios agreed to seek Code approval and certification before distributing films. The Code served to restrict language and content in films and focused on regulating representations of sexuality, crime, religion, miscegenation, and adultery.

Hays also created a foreign department in the mid-1920s headed by Major Frederick L. Herron, which mediated conflicts among foreign nations, the State Department, and the industry. These conflicts often included accusations of monopolistic distribution practices, such as the practice of block booking, in which distributors sell films as a block in order to ensure audiences for poorly performing films.

In 1945, Hays retired and was replaced by Eric Johnston. The organization then became known as the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA). The Code remained until 1968, when it was replaced by the ratings system we have today. The duties undertaken by the MPPDA are now directed by two affiliated organizations. The MPAA deals with domestic distribution and organizes films within the ratings system. The Motion Picture Association (MPA) deals with international distribution issues.

See also: Hays Office and Censorship, The

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—Babli Sinha

MOVIE STAR, THE. During the early twentieth century, Hollywood studios became the birthplace of “movie stars” and of the star system in general. Before the advent of this cinematic system, films were released as productions populated by anonymous actors, as only the studios that produced these pictures were credited. Certain screen performers, however, enjoyed wider popularity than others, and the films in which they acted appeared to do better at the box office. Once they realized the potential profits to be made by creating motion picture “stars,” studios began to exploit the capital value of their most popular performers by connecting their productions with the names of the actors who were appearing in their films.

In 1910, film distribution mogul Carl Laemmle of the Independent Motion Picture Company made public the name of actress Florence Lawrence; this event signaled the beginning of the star system. To boost publicity around *The Broken Oath* (1910), in which Lawrence was starring, Laemmle issued an ominous press release with the news that the actress had died in a terrible accident. When the story broke, film fans were shocked; Laemmle, of course, had planted the story—Lawrence was very much alive. Taking out an advertisement that declared “We Nail a Lie,” Laemmle actually went so far as to accuse rival studio Biograph of releasing the story in an attempt to smear IMP’s new film. In the end, Laemmle got just what he wanted: publicity for his new film and for its star, Florence Lawrence.

The popularity of their newly minted movie stars led studios to create new modes of industry advertising: trade photographs, posters, postcards, and fan magazines (*Motion Picture Story Magazine*, *Photoplay*), all of which accompanied the release of their films. Now studios began to create archetypal identities for their stars: females tended to be portrayed as vamps, virgins, and sex goddesses, while males tended to be portrayed as swashbuckling heroes who were irresistible to women. The more specific construction of gender identity varied from the “girlish” image of Lillian Gish to the “diva” image of Bette Davis; Marlene Dietrich was elegantly seductive, while Greta Garbo’s sensuality smoldered just beneath an icy exterior. Male stars such as Rudolph Valentino and Douglas Fairbanks Sr., and later, John Wayne and Rock Hudson, embodied “manliness”—they were “men’s men.” (Ironically, Valentino, who was swooned over by women, was constantly “accused,” usually by envious males, of being gay, or at least bisexual, throughout his career; while Hudson, who was considered one of the sexiest men in Hollywood, was forced to hide his homosexuality from an adoring public until very late in his life.) Racial and ethnic minorities (Native Americans, African Americans, Hispanics, and Asian Americans) were also subject to stereotyping, most often being portrayed on-screen as villains or at least as marginalized figures.

Significantly, the concept of stardom reflects an almost surrealistic duality that exists between the actual people and the larger-than-life filmic characters they play on-screen. Today’s technology—the Internet, Webcams, chat rooms, blogs, Twitter—which allows the most intimate information to be transferred around the world almost instantaneously, has only made it easier for these bizarre hybrid figures to be created. Stars, it seems, have become ideological constructs, representing specific social phenomena characteristic of a certain time and place. Although many of today’s stars have become fabulously wealthy power players in the film industry, the hyperreal lives that they are forced to lead appear also to make them incredibly fragile human beings.

See also: Studio System, The

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—Réka M. Cristian

MUSIC IN FILM. American film music fulfills numerous dramatic and narrative functions. Chief among these is its ability to enhance the emotional impact of a film by helping to establish time, place, mood, and situation (Brown, 1994). Two broad categories of film music are generally recognized: diegetic source music and nondiegetic underscoring (Brown, 1994; Buhler, 2001). Diegetic music exists within the story itself and can be heard by a film’s characters, whether or not they are listening. It is often merely part of the background soundscape, such as when heard on a radio, played at a wedding, or sung at a funeral. In some cases, the source of the music may not be visible in the frame. Musical performances foregrounded in the story are also diegetic. Films about musicians, such as *8 Mile* (2002), *Walk the Line* (2005), and *August Rush* (2007), typically include numerous instances of this type of diegetic music, but they also occur in other types of film. When Pippin sings “The Edge of Night” for Denethor in the award-winning *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (2003), the audience witnesses a diegetic musical moment. Nondiegetic underscoring exists outside of the story. Although a film’s characters do not hear this music, it can influence how audiences experience a film. Many love scenes and action sequences, for example, are accompanied by nondiegetic music.

Composers and music supervisors regularly blur these distinctions. Music first presented as diegetic may accompany a scene that crosscuts between the musical performance and other, visually unrelated images. Diegetic music can also spill over scene changes. Some films have also treated these musical conventions comically. Nevertheless, these categories, whether flexibly employed or not, have enabled film composers and music supervisors to draw on diverse musical styles and repertoires. The resulting scores and their associated films have thus exposed American audiences to many different types of music, and the manner in which those have been used has reinforced the evolving construction of American identities in film.

American film has been accompanied by music from early in its history. Edison’s Kinetophone (1895) paired moving pictures with phonographic recordings, while live piano and orchestral music was played as films were projected by his Vitascope (1896). During the first two decades of the twentieth century, American vaudeville theaters



Grace Kelly stands behind James Stewart while he uses the telephoto lens of his camera to spy on his neighbors in a still from director Alfred Hitchcock's film *Rear Window*, 1954. (Paramount Pictures/Courtesy of Getty Images)

presented increasing numbers of motion pictures, and their orchestras regularly provided accompaniment. By the 1920s, theater organs were widespread, and many theater musicians employed cue sheets and compilation scores of nineteenth-century classical music to accompany films (Hickman, 2006; Wierzbicki, 2009; Cooke, 2008). Since the invention of sound-on-film technologies in the late 1920s, the unique musical soundtrack—often consisting wholly of newly composed music—that is pre-recorded and precisely synchronized with the specific imagetrack of a particular film has dominated American commercial film production.

Musical theater and nineteenth-century operas and symphonies inspired the style and provided many of the sources of film music in the silent era, and they continued to influence film scores in the sound era. Several important Hollywood film composers in the 1930s, including Max Steiner (1888–1971) and Erich Korngold (1897–1957), were from Europe and had been trained in those traditions. They established many of the narrative practices and devices of American film music that remain operative today (Prendergast, 1992). Steiner's score for *King Kong* (1933) is an outstanding example from the early sound era and demonstrates how European classical music shaped American film music in its formative period.

The many orchestral underscores composed for films from the 1930s through the 1950s, and again since the late 1970s, have maintained the close relationship between

classical music and film music. They have also been one of the primary means by which many Americans have been exposed to orchestral music in a broadly classical style (Prendergast, 1992). Furthermore, the changing character of orchestral underscoring has tracked the evolution of classical music in the twentieth century. The score to *The Red Pony* (1949) by Aaron Copland (1900–1990), a leading American classical composer during the early and mid-twentieth century, is representative of classically influenced scores from before the 1950s. (Copland even arranged portions of the score for concert performance.) However, since the 1950s, new timbres, including those of electronic music, a wide array of non-western instruments, and more dissonant harmonies have been heard in many film soundtracks. This mirrors postwar developments in music for the concert hall. The screeching string music by Bernard Herrmann (1911–1975) that accompanies the shower scene in Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960); the cue "The Land of the Sandpeople," with its pounding percussion, from the score by John Williams (b. 1932) to *Star Wars* (1977); and the underscoring by Marco Beltrami (b. 1966) for numerous action sequences in *3:10 to Yuma* (2007) attest to these transformations. Furthermore, some film soundtracks, such as those to Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) and *The Shining* (1980), have incorporated postwar, avant-garde concert pieces, while others, such as the score to *The Hours* (2002) by Philip Glass (b. 1937), have adopted the sound of American minimalism and postminimalism. Nevertheless, orchestral film scores have generally been more conservative in style than contemporaneous concert music, as is apparent when comparing the film and concert repertoires of John Williams.

Classical music has played a significant role in the history of underscoring in American films, but it has not been the only musical style heard in those films. From the late 1950s through the 1970s, jazz, rock, soul, and funk underscoring was common, and hip-hop has been included in films since the early 1990s (Cooke, 2008). Many soundtracks utilize a variety of musical styles, both classical and popular, and so can be considered composite soundtracks. The scores to the popular and award-winning films *Moulin Rouge!* (2001) and *Wall-E* (2008) are recent examples. Composite scores differ from anthology or compilation scores or soundtracks, which are pieced together solely from preexisting music (Donnelly, 2001). In the early decades of the twentieth century, the stylistic differences among opera and symphony, musical theater, and popular song were less acute than they have become since the 1950s. Thus in *Rose Marie* (1936), Rudolf Friml's famous song "Indian Love Call" exists alongside excerpts from Puccini's opera *Tosca*, but the differences in terms of musical style (and vocal timbre) are minute when compared to those heard in some films today.

American films with composite soundtracks that incorporate varied styles expose audiences to a broad sampling of American musical culture. As different genres and styles interact (and even collide)—for example, when diegetic material from an earlier era is framed by more contemporary orchestral underscoring—a soundtrack's musical coherence may break down for lack of consistency of style. Yet the soundtrack holds together because each of the various styles signifies an aspect of the American experience. *Rear Window* (1954), for example, includes representative pieces from several American musical repertoires. Although none is limited strictly to either diegetic or

nondiegetic purposes, in many composite soundtracks, classical-style orchestral music serves as nondiegetic underscoring, while jazz and popular styles function diegetically. This is the case in *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (1956), with its score by Bernard Herrmann, and in *Malcolm X* (1992), with its score by Terence Blanchard (b. 1962). In *Bathing Beauty* (1944), these contrasting styles are set at odds with each other within the plot. Yet these roles—classical underscoring and popular diegetic music—are not universal. Throughout *Forrest Gump* (1994), country, gospel, rock, and classical music are set side-by-side. The classical-style music exists almost entirely as nondiegetic underscoring and tends to highlight the individual and personal experiences of Forrest or other main characters. However, when a more corporate or national experience is invoked, such as during several scenes in Vietnam, popular music from the historical period depicted is regularly used as nondiegetic underscoring. Similarly, in *Pleasantville* (1998), orchestral underscoring highlights emotionally charged interactions between main characters, but some music from the 1950s functions nondiegetically, such as when several teenagers ask Bud and Mary Sue questions about the world beyond Pleasantville. Dave Brubeck's "Take Five" (1959) accompanies this scene, but it was not yet released in 1958, the year in which the movie supposedly occurs. Nevertheless, most of the popular music in *Forrest Gump* and *Pleasantville* is diegetic.

One of the most common ways composite soundtracks have been created is through the inclusion of songs. These may be newly composed for their films. "When You Wish Upon a Star" (*Pinocchio*, 1940); "The Ballad of High Noon" ("Do Not Forsake Me") (*High Noon*, 1952); the "Theme from *Shaft*" (*Shaft*, 1971); "My Heart Will Go On" (*Titanic*, 1997); and "Lose Yourself" (*8 Mile*) are all examples that won Academy Awards for Best Original Songs. Other songs are drawn from preexisting American folk, patriotic, and popular repertoires. For example, "Oh My Darling, Clementine" appears in both Frank Capra's *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939) and John Ford's *My Darling Clementine* (1946), while "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" is sung during a church service in *High Noon*, and "Amazing Grace" is heard prior to a hanging in *True Grit* (1969). "Put on Your Sunday Clothes" from *Hello, Dolly* (1964) is used to great effect in *Wall-E*, while songs from several genres and decades saturate *Moulin Rouge!*

The cinema has had a central role in disseminating popular music (Cooke, 2008); therefore, it is not surprising that the history of songs in film reflects the broader history of popular music in America. Films whose stories take place in their own time (i.e., in the period of their production) have necessarily drawn on ever-changing forms of contemporary musical expression. Thus, for example, when comparing songs included in scenes representing an evening's entertainment—whether these occur at lounges, elegant restaurants, theaters, or nightclubs—we find country music sung by Gene Autry, Roy Rogers, and Dale Evans in the 1930s and 1940s; big band and small combo jazz in *Cabin in the Sky* (1943), *Bathing Beauty*, *The Wrong Man* (1956), and *Anatomy of a Murder* (1959), among other films from the 1940s and 1950s; and '60s rock in *With Six You Get Eggroll* (1968), '70s soul in *Super Fly*, and late '80s jazz and rap in *Mo' Better Blues* (1990). This suggests that mainstream and popular American song styles in earlier decades may seem old-fashioned, culturally irrelevant, and not particularly "American" to later audiences. Indeed, the popularity of film musicals,

which are built around songs, declined after the 1950s until new film musicals incorporating more up-to-date musical styles, plots and characters, and/or production values began to be created. The success of *Grease* (1978), *Moulin Rouge!*, *Chicago* (2002), and even Disney's *High School Musical 3* (2008), as well as its string of animated film musicals starting with *The Little Mermaid* (1989), demonstrate this point. Of these films, *Moulin Rouge!* may be the most contemporary in terms of its score both because of the repertory of songs it incorporates and because of the postmodern manner in which it juxtaposes disparate and anachronistic musical styles and repertories.

Whether newly composed or preexisting, prominently or briefly used, or currently popular or old-fashioned, songs in film soundtracks fulfill numerous diegetic and non-diegetic roles. Many accompany title sequences, and their lyrics may reinforce the thematic content or reveal plot elements of their films. This occurs across genres. Examples from westerns of the 1950s and 1960s include *High Noon*, *The Man from Laramie* (1955), and *True Grit*; examples from urban/blaxploitation films of the 1970s include *Halls of Anger* (1970), *Shaft*, and *Super Fly* (1972). Some songs, such as "Someday My Prince Will Come" (*Snow White*, 1937), "Over the Rainbow" (*The Wizard of Oz*, 1939), "Anything You Can Do" (*Annie Get Your Gun*, 1950), and "A Whole New World" (*Aladdin*, 1992), reveal characters' feelings or desires. Others compress dramatic time or narrate more compellingly than would simple dialogue. "One Last Hope" (*Hercules*, 1997), "I'll Make a Man Out of You" (*Mulan*, 1998), and "When She Loved Me" (*Toy Story 2*, 1999) are examples from Disney's recent animated films.

Songs, even when sung, can form part of a film's nondiegetic underscoring (see the discussion of *Forrest Gump* and *Pleasantville* above). Moreover, instrumental arrangements allow melodies of songs within film soundtracks whose underscoring is primarily orchestral to wander between diegetic and nondiegetic registers. This extends the potential narrative power of a song beyond the moment at which it occurs diegetically. "The Ballad of High Noon," for example, is first performed as a nondiegetic song during the title sequence and introduces background information. Its melody later recurs as part of the orchestral underscore, but it also appears in the diegesis when one of Frank Miller's men plays it on a harmonica. Similar situations arise in the soundtracks to such varied films as *Bathing Beauty* and *Super Fly*. Furthermore, they undermine the strict distinctions some have drawn among song, (under)score, and soundtrack. In contrast, other songs in American films have served primarily as performance vehicles for their actor-singers. In these cases, the distinction between songs and scores is more apparent.

When they operate as diegetic music in American films, songs often enhance the realism of the portrayals of the textures of daily life by establishing a sense of time, place, and situation. Even "old-fashioned" repertories are frequently employed in this role in film soundtracks to establish a sense of the American past. *American Graffiti* (1973), *Back to the Future* (1985), *Stand By Me* (1986), *Malcolm X*, *Forrest Gump*, *Panther* (all 1995), *Apollo 13* (1995), *Boogie Nights* (1997), and *Pleasantville* are examples of films that include songs from the earlier decades that they portray in order to enhance their historical verisimilitude. Such songs are often merely decorative, but

they can also emphasize events in the films' narratives, in which case they may reveal a director's reading of the American experience, past and present. *Forrest Gump* and *Panther* are roughly contemporaneous and partially overlap in terms of the periods that they recreate, yet they contain very different music and construct radically opposed perspectives on American identity and experience.

The history of music in American film can be interpreted, therefore, as a record of how American ethnic, cultural, and political identities have been depicted. Both songs and orchestral underscoring in film mark social and cultural boundaries, and both the music present in and absent from a film soundtrack implicitly answer such questions as "Who is American?" and "What is American?"

Just as music has been used to construct a sense of time and place in American films, it has also been employed to represent ethnic, cultural, and national identities. Similarly, just as styles of music used in films to represent historical periods have not always been thoroughly accurate when recreating the actual musical soundscape of the past, well-established musical clichés understood to denote race, ethnicity, and nationality have regularly replaced authentic forms of musical expression. This suggests that perceptions of time, place, and people shared by both filmmakers and audiences have often governed the selection of music to a greater degree than has concern for absolute historical accuracy or ethnographic realism. This is true both for films set in their own time and for those that look back in time. Crude representations of ethnic music in film are not always merely about ethnicity, however. They often participate, albeit negatively, in the construction of American identities. We can see this in the contrast between the heroic presentation of "America the Beautiful" and the exoticized "Arabic" music (played during Harry Bannerman's daydreams about his wife) in *Rally 'Round the Flag, Boys* (1958), a darkly humorous treatment of American suburban life set against the backdrop of national security concerns in the early Cold War.

Westerns provide numerous additional examples. The singing cowboys and particularly Gene Autry and Roy Rogers, who enjoyed such popularity through radio, recordings, and film during the 1930s and 1940s, can be interpreted as representatives of an idealized American male in the early twentieth century. Clean-cut, chivalrous, law-abiding, and white, these actor-characters were always good, always protected the rights of individuals (and their property), and always won. Their songs were well within the mainstream of American commercial music of the time, and some have remained within the American musical consciousness. When the cowboy chorus "Sons of the Pioneers" is fused with a nineteenth-century cavalry troop on patrol against Apaches in John Ford's *Rio Grande* (1950), the implicit political and cultural meanings of the wholesome, white, and singing agents of law and order are magnified. Contrarily, Native Americans, Mexican Americans, and African Americans were marginalized as villains, thieves, victims, or members of an underclass in westerns prior to the 1960s. Their music was likewise relegated to the margins, to be heard only in run-down Mexican saloons or in dangerous or exotic places, such as Native villages. Thus in *The Man from Laramie*, the music used to represent both murderous Apaches and peaceful Pueblos is virtually the same, while the very title *Distant Drums* (1951) shows how music itself, authentic or not, can stand in for the threatening Other

(in this case, Seminoles). The implication is that such people and their music were not “American.” Contrarily, in *High Noon*, white, Protestant hymn singing occurs in church, at the center of the community, at the site where important political and social debate—democracy—takes place. Although revisionist westerns, such as the drama *Dances with Wolves* (1990) and the comedy *Shanghai Noon* (2000), may undermine and even mock common misrepresentations of ethnic minorities in the genre, revisionist westerns have been faulted for reinforcing their own era’s lingering misconceptions.

Orchestral underscoring can also construct American identities. Westerns and war films do so through their brassy, heroic march themes. Moreover, quotations of the melodies of American folk and patriotic songs thrust American identity to the foreground of film narratives. Steiner quotes several such songs in his orchestral underscores for *Gone with the Wind* (1939) and *The Old Maid* (1939) even as these films wrestle with the personal and societal significance of the American Civil War. Likewise, his score to *Watch on the Rhine* (1943) weaves together fragments of the melodies of “My Country, ’Tis of Thee” and “The Star Spangled Banner” to suggest the significance of American political ideals during World War II. Those same ideals are at the heart of *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, and Dimitri Tiomkin (1894–1979) highlighted them during the montage of Washington landmarks with an American musical mosaic consisting of quotations of the melodies of “Yankee Doodle,” “My Country, ’Tis of Thee,” “The Star Spangled Banner,” “When Johnny Comes Marching Home,” “Taps,” and “The Battle Hymn of the Republic.”

Representations of American ideals—the American moral geography—are neither timeless nor uncontested, and differences among regions of America, rural and urban settings, and, increasingly, minority experiences are reflected in film music. Thus the visual construction of the nation created as *Forrest Gump* runs across the country is accompanied by very different music compared to the scores of Steiner and Tiomkin, while *Panther* employs a rock version of “America the Beautiful” for very different ends in a scene in which the Black Panthers occupy the California State Capitol. Likewise, the hip-hop song “Jazz Thing,” which plays over the final credits in Spike Lee’s *Mo’ Better Blues*, summarizes jazz history and gives voice to the long legacy of conflict between different ethnic populations in America. Traces of those conflicts persist in American film today. Nevertheless, the popular and critical reception of *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008) and its soundtrack in America may point to a greater appreciation for diverse forms of cultural expression among the filmgoing public today than in past decades.

American film music has fulfilled numerous dramatic functions. It has also served as a cipher of contemporaneous (and contested) attitudes about American identity and experience. Yet film music also holds out the possibility of cultural and social reconciliation as the many stories it tells continue to be widely circulated by the films it accompanies.

See also: Musical, The

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—Stanley C. Pelkey II

MUSICAL, THE. The American movie musical has been called "the most complex art form ever devised," with the power to transport audiences across time and space. Even when grounded in an historical or contemporary "reality," film musicals operate in a hyperbolic universe to which the viewer has access only for the duration of the movie experience. Spectators are urged to suspend disbelief, as characters sing and dance in a variety of situations, usually spontaneously and always with perfect pitch and rhythm.



Scene from the 2001 film *Moulin Rouge*, directed by Baz Luhrmann. Shown: (left to right) John Leguizamo (as Henri Toulouse-Lautrec), Garry McDonald (as the Doctor), Matthew Whittet (as Satie), Jim Broadbent (as Harold Zidler), Nicole Kidman (as Satine), Jacek Koman (as The Narcoleptic Argentinean). (Photofest)

Significantly, the rise of movie musicals paralleled the emergence of talking pictures. The first “talkie,” 1927’s *The Jazz Singer*, is a musical film, and its immediate popularity prompted studio heads (most notably MGM) to begin producing musicals by the score from the late 1920s forward. From the beginning, musicals were a hybrid form of entertainment, not easily identifiable as a unique “genre.” They borrowed from virtually every other form of art and entertainment, from opera to ballet to theatre to vaudeville, and their hybrid roots are especially evident in early musical films. Following *The Jazz Singer*, studios first produced a series of plot-light, music-heavy melodramas and musical revues, such as *The Singing Fool* (1928), and *The Broadway Melody* (1929). Immensely popular, these films were often vehicles for stars and up-and-comers, such as Al Jolson, Jack Benny, and Bing Crosby, that the studios wished to showcase.

Musicals have tended to subordinate plot to character and are usually marked by happy endings and the triumph of domesticity and value-laden normativity. Several scholars, however, have argued that beneath the spectacle of choreographed numbers and show-stopping songs, musicals serve a number of important cultural purposes. For instance, these films have, at times, assuaged social anxieties about the seemingly incompatible worlds of men and women in the wake of women’s liberation (Altman, 1987), while also putting the male body on display, an act that challenges traditional gender and social hierarchies (Cohen, 2002). Indeed, musicals challenging traditional ideas about gender and sexuality, such as *Easter Parade* (1948), *Some Like It Hot* (1959), *Cabaret* (1972), *High School Musical* (2006), *Mamma Mia!* (2008), and *Were the World Mine* (2009), have long been popular.

Musicals have also pressured attitudes about race, ethnicity, and class. Not only did they provide actors, singers, and dancers of color work in white Hollywood, their deceptively simple and upbeat formats allowed them to call into question racial hierarchies in a relatively nonthreatening manner. The 1951 version of Kern and Hammerstein’s *Show Boat* (despite its many flaws), for example, exposed the problematic treatment of African Americans and “mulattoes” during both the antebellum period of the nineteenth century and the pre–Civil Rights era of the early twentieth century, and in so doing, drew attention to America’s still unresolved racial tension. In much the same way, *West Side Story* (1961) called attention to the unfair treatment of immigrants in urban America, while the animated *Cats Don’t Dance* (1997) critiqued segregation in Hollywood.

In regard to issues of class, film musicals such as 1982’s *Annie*, *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (1967), *Daddy Long Legs* (1955), and *Bundle of Joy*—a 1956 remake of 1939’s *Bachelor Mother*—all depict the arbitrariness of constructions of class identity, and, in many cases, the enduring spirit and determination of the poor.

Perhaps the most important cultural function of the movie musical is its ability to articulate American values and myths. Regardless of its temporal or geographic setting, the musical tends always to be nostalgic and uniquely American. The protagonists are almost always admirable, or become so over the course of the film, and in a particularly American way. For instance, in Stanley Donen’s *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (1954), the central male characters grow to maturity under the eye of God-fearing and independent Millie, who teaches them to respect women and take responsibility for their

lives, both traditional “American values.” Similarly, in Lerner and Lowe’s *Brigadoon* (1954), the American protagonists come to understand that “anything is possible” in the hills of far-off Scotland; because this is an “American value,” however, it cannot be realized in Scotland, only discovered there, and thus the heroes must ultimately return to their homeland rather than remaining in Europe. Especially in depicting the past, the movie musical is capable of espousing a particular picture of the American story—one in which (usually white) Americans are industrious and prosperous, and in their righteousness and desire to *do* right, are granted access to their American Dream, no matter how seemingly out of reach. Notable examples of musicals with this theme are *The Little Colonel* (1935), *Yankee Doodle Dandy* (1942), *Singin’ in the Rain* (1952), *1776* (1972), and the animated *An American Tail* (1986).

Not all movie musicals end happily, however, and not all end with a triumphant espousal of the American Dream. The 1968 film *Funny Girl* (and its 1975 sequel, *Funny Lady*), for example, tells the story of Fanny Brice, whose American Dreams force her to make a painful choice: she can have either love and family or fame and fortune—she cannot have both. Although at the end of *Funny Lady*, Fanny’s character declares herself happy having made her choice for the life of a performer, the film acts to subvert the traditional “musical promise” that American Dreams always come true. Tom Hanks extends this theme in his 1996 *That Thing You Do*, whose characters, performers like Fanny, must make choices about how far they are willing to go for fame. Choosing to follow their artistic dreams, however, the protagonists discover that no matter how hard they work, or how pure their intentions, true fame eludes them.

Traditionally, the goal of those films that do romanticize the idea of the American Dream tended to be to establish rural and small-town America as utopian. Clearly evident in films such as *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1944), and *Oklahoma!* (1955), the expression of this utopian vision has the effect of reassuring audiences by providing them with a dominant historical narrative. Interestingly, this model of American Dreams being realized in rural utopia is troped in pictures such as *On the Town* (1949) and *Gypsy!* (1962), which reimagine not only the dream, now less nostalgic for small-town simplicity, but also the utopian space itself, now defined in relation to urban centers and industrial progress.

In the 1930s and 1940s, musicals became increasingly popular, and studios began producing dozens per year. Many of the great stars of the day rose to fame at this time, including Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers, Judy Garland, Vera-Ellen, Betty Garrett, Gene Kelly, Ann Miller, Danny Kaye, Frank Sinatra, and Shirley Temple. But as popular as musicals were in these years, the genre reached the height of its popularity in the 1950s—the golden age of movie musicals. The decade saw the rise of Leslie Caron, Howard Keel, and, among many others, and produced some of the most popular musicals of the twentieth century, including *White Christmas* (1954), *Gigi* (1958), *Some Like It Hot* (1959), *Oklahoma!* (1955), and *A Star Is Born* (1954). Many of the films from this period are also lauded for their innovation; most especially for their marriage of music and realism. Films such as Vincente Minnelli’s *Meet Me in St. Louis* and Donen’s *Seven Brides* skillfully interjected the standard traits of the musical genre (spontaneous dancing and singing, for example) into the plot, creating the impression

that these elements were actually diegetic to the film. For example, all but one number in *Seven Brides* are choreographed to make the protagonists look as though they are not in fact dancing. So too in *St. Louis*, the music comes about as a consequence of the plot, as Judy Garland's character is asked to perform or to sing her sister to sleep.

By the 1960s, the musical was losing its widespread popularity. Despite the enduring popularity of films such as *West Side Story* (1961), *Hello, Dolly!* (1969) and *The Sound of Music* (1965), the allure of the musical was starting to dim among younger generations, who saw these pictures as overly nostalgic and not representative of contemporary American life or concerns. The musical declined still more in the 1970s, with most successes either animated, or based in rock and roll or disco (*Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Rocky Horror Picture Show*). Those films that did emerge as box-office and critical successes in this period were often categorized as cynical, such as 1971's *Fiddler on the Roof*; though by the end of the decade, movies such as the celebrated *The Muppet Movie* (1979) and coming-of-age pictures such as *Grease* (1978) and *Fame* (1980) seemed to signal a desire by audiences to return to the idealism and levity of earlier musicals. Despite these successes, however, by the early 1980s, even with gems such as *Annie* and *Victor Victoria* (both 1982), it seemed as though the musical might die out.

In the late 1980s, however, salvation came from an unlikely source—Walt Disney Studios and its animated feature *The Little Mermaid* (1989). Disney had previously produced a large number of animated films, many of them musicals, but *Mermaid's* timely appearance in many ways saved the movie musical from obscurity. Its immense popularity prompted Disney to make over its production department, which in turn led to the rapid production and release of some of the most beloved American films in recent memory. Notable among these were *Beauty and the Beast* (1991) (the only animated film ever to be nominated for a Best Picture Oscar), *Aladdin* (1992), and *The Lion King* (1994).

Although the popularity of Disney's animated features eventually declined after the studio released *Mulan* in 1998, the movie musical reemerged in exciting new ways in the 1990s. Beginning with Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo and Juliet* (1996), with its ensemble cast of popular young actors and its pounding soundtrack, musicals began to attract the kinds of audiences that these films had not drawn since the 1940s and '50s. Indeed, the release of pictures such as Luhrmann's *Moulin Rouge!* (2001) (which featured Nicole Kidman and Ewan McGregor as unlikely yet, as it turned out, brilliant protagonists); 2002's Best Picture *Chicago* (which again presented audiences with performers in starring roles who initially seemed like odd choices—Richard Gere, Renée Zellweger, Catherine Zeta-Jones—but who proved just how versatile and talented they are); *The Producers* (2005) (a remake of Mel Brooks's 1968 film, this time starring Nathan Lane and Matthew Broderick); and the dazzling *Across the Universe* and *Enchanted* (both 2007), made it clear that musicals could still thrill movie audiences.

See also: Music in Film

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—Caitlin Gallogly

NATIVE AMERICANS IN FILM. Cinema has influenced society's view of Native Americans more than, perhaps, any other racial or ethnic group. While hundreds of tribes, each with their own culture and traditions, comprise the indigenous people known as Native Americans, films have been largely responsible for the oversimplification of this diversity and the perpetuation of the myth of the homogeneous American Indian. Building on the inaccurate portrayals of Native Americans established in the nineteenth-century novels of authors such as James Fenimore Cooper and Robert Bird, early westerns created stereotypes that dominated Hollywood's Indian characters for decades. Changes in American society resulted in changes in these stereotypes, most notably a shift from highly negative portrayals toward more sympathetic ones; but despite this, the film industry has still relied largely on stereotypes rather than historically accurate representations. Furthermore, while Indians have long provided Hollywood with a long line of movie characters, those roles have often gone to non-Native American performers. Beginning in the 1990s, however, Native actors and filmmakers have begun to increasingly reverse these trends, providing more accurate screen representations of their people.

Westerns rose to prominence during the silent era, and it was during this period that Hollywood established the stereotypes that would come to dominate its later portrayals of Native Americans. The bloodthirsty savage, intent on massacring whites, and the noble savage, the last remnant of a dying race, were the two most common images of American Indians presented by the movies. Since the nation was still struggling with its attempts to assimilate Native Americans into mainstream society, these stereotypes helped to reinforce the prevailing view of Indians-as-primitives and emphasize the necessity of assimilation. Plains tribes, such as the Sioux and Cheyenne, became the predominant on-screen Indians, for the wars they fought against westward expansion in the late nineteenth century made ideal fodder for westerns. Because many Americans' only contact with Indians was at the movies, much of the population came to accept the accuracy of these stereotypes, as well as aspects of the Plains culture, including feathered headdresses, war paint, and tepees, as being part of the culture of all Native American tribes.

While the silent era introduced the stereotypes that dominated later cinematic Indians, those stereotypes were not yet firmly established, allowing for more progressive, albeit short-lived, portrayals. Some filmmakers, including D. W. Griffith and Thomas Ince, made films that featured all-Native American casts and attempted to show sympathetic, if historically inaccurate, depictions of Native life. Furthermore, a handful of Native Americans, such as filmmaker James Young Deer, worked within the Hollywood system during the silent era and attempted to challenge the conventions of the western genre. Young Deer's 1910 cinematic love story *Young Deer's Return*, for instance, inverted the traditional white/Indian romance. In the film, a young Indian man falls in love with a white woman and eventually convinces her initially resistant father to accept their interracial relationship. However, when his lover offers her hand in marriage, the Indian refuses, preferring to return to the reservation and marry an Indian woman, showing that strengthening the future of the tribe was more important than assimilating into white society.

The stereotypes first established during the silent era became cemented during the 1930s. Eliminating more nuanced portrayals of Native Americans, Hollywood focused on the two most prominent images, those of the bloodthirsty savage and the noble savage. In the uncomplicated westerns of the 1930s, Indians served as convenient enemies for white heroes, and since the vast majority of the American moviegoing public was white, there was little demand for the more sophisticated Indian films of the silent years. By the late 1930s, the savage Indian had become a staple of the western and permeated big-budget pictures as well as serials and B-productions. Films such as Cecil B. DeMille's *Union Pacific* (1937) and John Ford's *Stagecoach* (1939) depict rampaging Indian tribes attacking white travelers in the Old West, while Ford's *Drums along the Mohawk* (1939) and King Vidor's *Northwest Passage* (1940) feature similar attacks during the Colonial Era. These movies provide little to no explanation for why their murderous Indians are on the warpath, but simply imply that attacking whites was what Indians always did, and that peace and "civilization" could only come with their defeat.

Not all westerns made during these decades adopted the virulently racist stereotype of the savage Indian, however. Some viewed the plight of Native Americans with sympathy, seeing them as hindrances to white expansion but also empathizing with them as members of a dying race. While still an erroneous stereotype that failed to accurately portray Native culture, these pictures did recognize the tragedy of their defeat. Raoul Walsh's *They Died with Their Boots On* (1941) and Ford's *Fort Apache* (1948), for example, provide far more sympathetic views of Indian characters than other westerns of the era. These films view Indians less as outright villains than simply obstacles to westward expansion, and suggest that while their defeat was unfortunate, it was also necessary for the nation's progress. They show whites, often corrupt businessmen, provoking otherwise peaceful Indians into action, but once the wronged Indians go to war, the army has no choice but to deal with them forcefully. The films' white protagonists respect their Indian foes and are sympathetic to their plight, going so far as to vainly argue on behalf of the Indians and against the predations of the corrupt whites responsible for the Indians' hostility.

Sympathetic portrayals of Native Americans increased in number and scope during the 1950s, fueled by broader trends in American society. Due to World War II, Germans and Japanese provided Hollywood with new villains for its action-oriented movies, freeing Indians from the role which they had most commonly filled on-screen. Additionally, progressive films of this era, such as Delmer Daves's *Broken Arrow* (1950) and Ford's *The Searchers* (1956), examine racism through the lens of the western, commenting on the civil rights movement by using their Indian characters as stand-ins for African Americans. *Broken Arrow* focuses on an army scout (James Stewart) who achieves understanding and, ultimately, friendship with Apache chief Cochise (Jeff Chandler), only to see racist whites break the peace and murder the Indian woman he loves. In *The Searchers*, an ex-soldier (John Wayne) spends five years combing the West for his niece who was abducted during a Comanche raid, but plans to kill her rather than rescue her. Overcome by his racism, he believes the time she has spent among the Comanche has irreversibly tainted her. By examining racism in such a manner, these films, and others like them, foreshadowed more significant changes to come.

By the late 1960s, the combined influences of the New Left, the counterculture, and the Vietnam War led to a radical shift in the way Hollywood films presented American Indians. Revisionist westerns such as Ralph Nelson's *Soldier Blue* and Arthur Penn's *Little Big Man*, both produced in 1970, no longer showed Indians as vicious savages, or even as unfortunate obstacles standing in the way of American progress. Instead, they now served as stand-ins for the Vietnamese, appearing as paragons of decency who are victimized by the racist, bloodthirsty American army. Both films prominently feature massacres of Indian villages at the hands of the now-barbaric cavalry, drawing direct comparisons to the My Lai Massacre in Vietnam. Additionally, reflecting the views of the counterculture, the films show Indians living at one with nature while depicting white society as greedy and corrupt. Jack Crabb (Dustin Hoffman), the protagonist of *Little Big Man*, moves back and forth between the two cultures, and while his experiences among the Sioux are uniformly positive, those among whites are miserable and violent. However, while these films present Indian characters in a far more sympathetic light than previous westerns, their portrayals are no more historically accurate. They simply offer new, more positive stereotypes in place of the old, negative ones, using these inaccurate portrayals to criticize contemporary American society.

With the western out of vogue, Native Americans appeared in few films during the late 1970s and 1980s, but in the early 1990s, Hollywood produced a new wave of films focusing on Indian characters. Influenced by factors such as the American Indian movement and a growing awareness of the mistreatment of Native Americans by the United States government, these pictures proved to be far more sympathetic toward Indian characters than their predecessors. Kevin Costner's *Dances with Wolves* (1990) was the most prominent of these, winning Academy Awards for Best Picture and Director. The story of a Civil War officer who abandons white society and is accepted as a member of a band of Lakota Sioux, the film presents its Indian characters in a highly positive light. *Dances with Wolves* retains trappings of earlier westerns, presenting its Pawnee villains as stereotypical bloodthirsty savages, telling the film from the perspective of its white protagonist, and finding a convenient romantic lead for

Costner in a white woman living with the Sioux. However, it also attempts to accurately portray life among the Sioux; sees its Indian characters as real individuals who express humor, sorrow, and anger; and uses the Lakota language and English subtitles rather than employing the stereotypical broken English of earlier films.

This trend toward more accurate and sympathetic portrayals of Indians is reflected in the films that both preceded and followed *Dances with Wolves*, such as the modern-day road picture *Powwow Highway* (1989); *Thunderheart* (1992), an FBI thriller set on a Sioux reservation; and Michael Mann's retelling of *Last of the Mohicans* (1992). These pictures attempt to show a greater respect for Native American culture, view the plight of their Indian characters with great sympathy, and present them as fully developed individuals. For instance, although appearing at first glance to be a stereotypical bloodthirsty savage, Magua (Wes Studi), the villain of *Last of the Mohicans*, is actually driven by a lust for revenge after the murder of his family by the British, the type of individual motivation missing from earlier Indian heavies.

Smoke Signals, released in 1998, was a major landmark for Native Americans in cinema, as it was the first film to be written, produced, and directed by Native filmmakers. Directed by Chris Eyre and written by Sherman Alexie, from his own short story, the film won the prestigious Audience Award at the Sundance Film Festival and launched the career of Native American actor Adam Beach. *Smoke Signals'* subject matter—a modern-day road picture that presents a realistic, unflinching look at the difficulties of reservation life—is indicative of the concerns of most Native filmmakers. Rather than focusing on the conflict between whites and Indians that dominate many westerns, Native American writers and directors generally attempt to reveal the issues that face their people today, such as poverty, alcoholism, and dislocation. Eyre has gone on to direct several films, as well as television adaptations of Tony Hillerman's Jim Chee/Joe Leaphorn mysteries starring Beach and Studi, and Alexie made his own directorial debut in 2002 with *The Business of Fancydancing*.

While Hollywood prominently featured Indians in hundreds of films throughout its history, major Indian roles have rarely gone to Native American actors. Driven by box-office concerns, filmmakers relied on non-Native performers with familiar names in order to draw in audiences. White actors, such as Jeff Chandler (*Broken Arrow*) and Rock Hudson (*Taza, Son of Cochise*), and Latinos, such as Anthony Quinn (*They Died with Their Boots On*) and Jorge Rivero (*Soldier Blue*) often filled major Indian roles, while Native performers were generally relegated to minor parts or appearances as extras. Even a director as prominent as Ford was not immune from this trend. When casting *Cheyenne Autumn*, his final western, Ford wanted to feature Native American actors in all the Indian parts, but was told by the studio that bigger name stars were needed, necessitating the casting of Italian American Sal Mineo and Latinos Ricardo Montalban, Gilbert Roland, and Dolores del Rio, instead.

Few Native American actors successfully broke through in Hollywood until recent years. Jay Silverheels, best known as Tonto in the long-running *The Lone Ranger* television series, appeared in numerous films from the 1940s through the 1970s, while Chief Yowlachie and Chief John Big Tree appeared in prominent westerns, as well. In the 1970s, Chief Dan George achieved great success in a pair of important westerns, *Little*

Big Man and *The Outlaw Josey Wales*, receiving an Academy Award nomination as Best Supporting Actor for the former. Already in his sixties at the time, George specialized in playing wise and witty Indians who always seem to be slightly bemused by the ways of white culture. Ironically, however, one of the most successful “Native American” actors in Hollywood history turned out to be no such thing. Iron-Eyes Cody, who appeared in over 100 films and was best known as the Indian shedding a single tear over a polluted landscape in a 1970s television commercial, claimed to be half-Cree and half-Cherokee but was recently revealed to be of Italian, not Native American, descent.

In recent years, Hollywood films have moved increasingly toward casting Native Americans in Indian roles, and this practice has led to a handful of Native actors achieving a level of stardom within the industry. By casting Native Americans in all the Indian roles of *Dances with Wolves*, Costner helped launch the careers of Graham Greene and Studi, two of Hollywood’s most prominent Native actors. Greene, whose work on the film garnered him a Best Supporting Actor Oscar nomination, has gone on to a successful career as perhaps Hollywood’s best-known Native American actor, appearing in films such as *The Green Mile* (1999) and *Transamerica* (2005). Studi, who had a small but important role as a Pawnee villain in *Dances with Wolves*, rose to prominence two years later in *Last of the Mohicans*, appeared as the title character in Walter Hill’s *Geronimo: An American Legend* (1993), and has worked steadily since. In the late 1990s, Beach joined Greene and Studi as a third Native American star in Hollywood, originally gaining notice in *Smoke Signals*, and then starring in the big-budget World War II dramas *Windtalkers* (2001) and *Flags of Our Fathers* (2006). Unfortunately, while some Native American actresses, such as Tantoo Cardinal (*Smoke Signals*) and Sheila Tousey (*Thunderheart*) find regular work in Hollywood, none have achieved the level of success of their male counterparts.

See also: Ethnic and Immigrant Culture Cinema; Western, The

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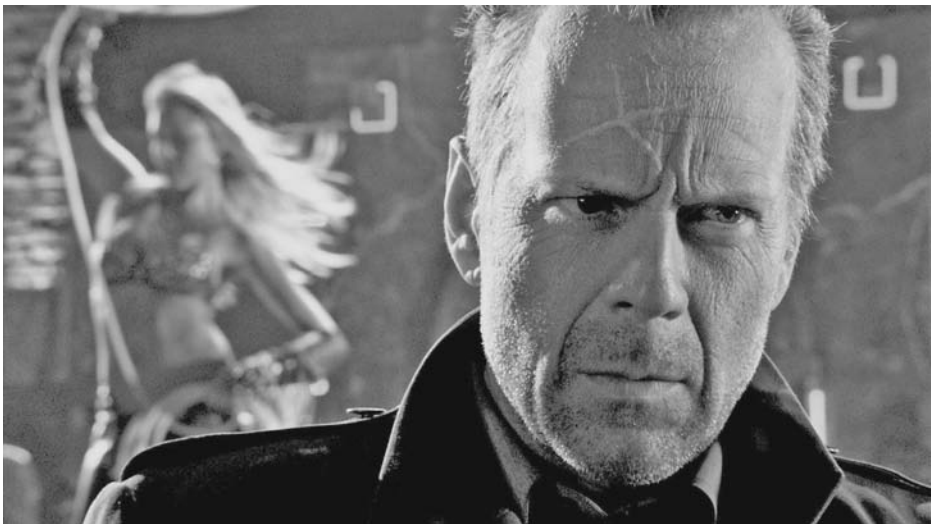
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—Bryan Kvet

NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN FILM. Film undergoes technical, cultural, and institutional changes that transform the roles and rules of the cinema in today's societies. New technologies introduced with the arrival of digitalization have democratized filmmaking, making it "open source," and ultimately software-based.

By the end of the twentieth century, film has "become embedded in—or perhaps lost in—the new technologies that surround it" (Friedberg, 2000), as the differences among medial forms have diminished. The introduction of computer-generated imagery, computer-based editing, and digital filmmaking technologies created an inter-medial digital space. Due to the technological leap from hardware to software, medium is no longer the message itself, as Marshall McLuhan proclaimed in the 1960s; but, as Nicolas Negroponte suggested, an embodiment of it that can be derived and regenerated from the same data (Negroponte, 1995). Instead of the traditional narrative techniques, technological changes are introducing database and game logic into films (Peter Howitt's 1998 *Sliding Doors* or Tom Tykwer's *Run, Lola, Run* of the same year are notable early examples) that testifies to the "softwarization" (Manovich, 2008) of the entire film industry—both in terms of production and reception, or aesthetics.

Celluloid-based, traditional filmmaking is being rapidly overtaken by digitized recording and data storage to match up with the already digital, software-based post-production device, and primarily to save costs. While these devices were constructed in the light of "remediation" (that is, software environments are designed as digital copies of previous devices and technologies), today the mode and method of filmmaking goes far beyond this. With the introduction of virtual cinematography and motion graphics, cinematic technology entered onto a path that necessitates a redefinition of what film and cinema mean today. Lev Manovich dates the beginning of the "velvet revolution" in digital filmmaking to the period between 1993 and 1998, when the



Scene from the 2005 film *Sin City*, directed by Frank Miller and Robert Rodriguez. Pictured are Bruce Willis and Jessica Alba. (Photofest)

introduction of the After Effects software initiated a “gradual, almost invisible” shift in moving-image aesthetics (Manovich, 2008).

Digital filmmaking techniques under the umbrella term “virtual cinematography” (total or universal capture) are methods that utilize software-generated objects stored in databases. Films like those in the *Matrix* series (Larry and Andy Wachowski, 1999–2003), *Sin City* (Robert Rodriguez, 2005), and *300* (Zack Snyder, 2007) use digital backlots, which are composed with computer-generated scenery afterwards (105–06); for example, in the *Matrix*, actors’ faces were digitally captured and later used to manipulate facial expressions, eliminating the need for live footage shots (Borshukov et al.).

Softwarization affects not only the aesthetics of film, but also its logic of representation. Manovich’s *Soft Cinema* (the title alludes to software cinema) project (2005) is an intricate combination of installation and film, practice and theory in one. Its central part is a software algorithm that selects media objects (audio, narrative, and visual files) from a database and creates a unique output each time the film is played. It is the software, not the filmmaker or the spectator, which manipulates and authors the film; the logic of creating the sequences is that of the interrelation that is established between the algorithm and the database.

While the birth of the cinema is simultaneous with the birth of the cinematographic camera, the emerging technology is capable of producing film without this filmic device. The video of Radiohead’s *House of Cards* introduced the connection of a three dimensional imaging software by Geometric Informatics and the Velodyne LIDAR rotating laser scanner that recreates sets using geo-location data, resulting not only in a unique visual aesthetic, but in a database that can be regenerated by anyone in the world interested in making a short film. No camera or traditional filmmaking device was used during production; even the actors were scanned and digitally reproduced.

In the twenty-first century, the term “motion graphics” (also known as “design cinema”) is less problematic to relate to “moving picture” than film or cinema. Today, anybody is capable of producing films with the help of new digital technologies. This results in the democratization of motion picture production, even—to reformulate the title of Dziga Vertov’s classic *The Man with a Movie Camera* (1929)—without a camera.

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—Zoltán Dragon

NICKELODEON ERA, THE. The Nickelodeon Era began when the commercial exhibition of “moving pictures” suddenly became profitable in 1905. The novelty of seeing these moving pictures continued, even though there were no plots to speak of and the star system had not yet developed. Nickelodeon films were sold as entertainment, not as art.

The term “nickelodeon” is derived from combining the term “nickel”—the price of admission—and *odeon*, the Greek word for theater. Harry Davis and John Harris opened the first theatre devoted to nickelodeons, the Nickelodeon Theatre, in Pittsburgh, in 1905. Davis and Harris are often erroneously credited with coining the term “nickelodeon,” but the word had been applied to cheap entertainment since at least 1888. As news of the success of Pittsburgh’s movie-only Nickelodeon began to spread across the country, the name came to signify a nickel-charging moving-picture show. Davis had used a section of the arcade he owned as a small theater before recognizing an opportunity with the Nickelodeon. Like many subsequent nickelodeon operators, Davis located his theater next to his arcade to capitalize on the same transient market present in the business district. The Pittsburgh theater, typical for its era, seated 200 people. Open from 8 p.m. until midnight, with shows lasting 15 to 30 minutes, the Nickelodeon accommodated about 2,000 to 3,000 people per day. Music for the films



Barkers and ticket takers pose outside the entrance of a nickelodeon theater, 1905. (Getty Images)

was provided by a lone pianist, a form of accompaniment that subsequently became standard in these theaters

The storefront theaters that had popped up across the United States became nickelodeons when changes in what can be understood as the motion picture “process” created the conditions for owners to make enormous profits. These changes included the emergence of a large and growing audience base, a minimal level of feature film productions, a rental system for films, frequent program changes, and a continuous-exhibition format. By charging a nickel for admission, the nickelodeon format succeeded because working-class men and women could easily afford to attend movies. The price made the movies seem like a bargain to customers. For a few cents, working-class people could enjoy an attractive space and a short show.

By the time nickelodeon theatres became popular, many films had been standardized to a length of about 1,000 feet, equal to a reel of film, and contained rudimentary plots. Sometimes two or three subjects would be joined together in order to achieve the required 1,000 feet. Since, after a certain point, the novelty of merely watching any moving picture wore off, theatre owners began to understand that to attract audiences, they had to screen several different films a day. In order to fill the need of theatre owners for an increased number of films, distribution houses, which sold films at 10 or 12 cents per foot, and film “exchanges,” which rented films, emerged as part of a nickelodeon market system of exchange. Eventually, theatre owners saw the wisdom in renting films, and dozens of exchanges popped up around the country.

Nickelodeon filmmakers apparently had few artistic aspirations. They aimed simply to capitalize on the spectacle of seeing moving pictures. Nickelodeon posters generally mentioned only the title of the film and the production company; actors and actresses were not featured prominently until about 1910, as the “silent film era” began to dawn. Film companies usually produced one or two subjects per week, with directors and actors normally working without a script.

Many nickelodeon operators entered the business because it seemed like a sure get-rich-quick opportunity. How-to books, such as David Hulfish’s *Motion Picture Work*, and national magazines, such as the *Saturday Evening Post*, implied that theatre owners could virtually print their own money. All described the generic nickelodeon as a business that could be run by entrepreneurs of little means and experience. While some nickelodeons, like the Pittsburgh establishment, resembled movie palaces, others seated patrons in kitchen chairs that were not fastened to the floor. The theatres that spent more money, however, proved more profitable. At the height of its popularity, Davis and Harris’s Nickelodeon brought in 7,000 to 8,000 nickels a day.

By 1910, the movie industry had begun to mature, and moviegoers began to plan their outings instead of just ducking into a nickelodeon on a whim. Audiences now demanded better-quality films, as well as longer ones; and they were willing to pay more than a nickel for the experience of seeing such elaborate moving pictures. The Nickelodeon Era drew to a close as more and more theatres began to show the longer narrative films that were produced during the silent era.

See also: Silent Era, The

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—Caryn E. Neumann

POLITICS AND FILM. “Liberty’s too precious a thing to be buried in books,” Senator Jefferson Smith (James Stewart) declares in the stirring climactic scene of *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939). To the idealistic congressional neophyte, the Capitol dome represents more than marble staircases and walls; it represents the notion that, at least in the world of director Frank Capra, any child, “no matter what his race, color or creed,” can grow up to stand at the desk of Daniel Webster and declare that “there’s no place out there for graft, or greed, or lies, or compromise with human liberties.” The emotional story of “a David without even a slingshot” who is convinced “to do battle against the mighty Goliath,” *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* remains the quintessential film about American electoral politics (Keyishian, 2003). Giving expression to Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal philosophy, attacking political machine patronage, and inspiring countless new members of congress to compare themselves to the utopian “boy ranger,” *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* demonstrated that movies can validate the politics of a generation, repudiate corruption and demagogues, and even speculate about the future of our most sacred civic institution.

Even before the invention of recorded sound in the cinema, the movie industry played on audience sentiments in an effort to validate certain viewpoints and discredit others. Director D. W. Griffith’s deeply disturbing silent film *Birth of a Nation* (1915), for example—a portrayal of the Ku Klux Klan as America’s last, best hope for salvation—generated both vehement opposition and widespread popular support. Condemned as racist by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), *Birth of a Nation* not only included “depiction[s] of blacks as threatening savages,” but also encouraged revisionists to rewrite the history of Reconstruction (Christensen and Haas, 2005). Described by President Woodrow Wilson as “history written with lightning” after the film was screened at the White House, however—Griffith even quoted Wilson in the film to justify the Klan’s activities—*Birth of a Nation*’s adulatory vision of desperate white-hooded knights galloping to prevent Congress from putting “the white South under the heel of the black South” nevertheless became a powerful propaganda tool, as lynchings and Jim Crow laws proliferated. While it infuriated civil



Promotional portrait of Robert Redford (right) and Dustin Hoffman standing in front of the Washington Post Building in a still from director Alan J. Pakula's 1976 film *All the President's Men*. The actors portrayed *Post* reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, who were the first to investigate the Watergate scandal. (Getty Images)

rights proponents, then, Griffith's epic validated the views of those who still believed in the "lost cause" of Southern Redemption.

Other early films also created political waves, as directors and producers began to realize the power of the cinema to influence public opinion. While *The Birth of a Nation* valorized white supremacy, many films produced in the 1910s and 1920s expressed support for populist themes that heralded workers as the real heroes in American society. Pro-labor films such as *What Is to Be Done* (1914), *The Jungle* (1914), and *The Contrast* (1921) spurred protests and vindicated opponents of the treacherous working conditions in plants, mills, and mines. Ironically, the Labor Film Service—which produced *The Contrast*, a popular film about striking miners in West Virginia, and in 1922 remade *The Jungle*, a film based on Upton Sinclair's critique of the Chicago slaughterhouses—sometimes had to show populist films "in secret because

of official efforts to suppress [them] as inflammatory" (Booker, 2007). Blatant efforts to censor films viewed as radical ultimately prompted filmmakers to treat class in "indirect or allegorical ways, while avoiding any hints of support for socialism or radical labor activism" (Booker, 2007). Indeed, it seems that government censorship, bolstered by George Creel's World War I-era Committee for Public Information, even affected films like Charlie Chaplin's powerful *Modern Times* (1936). Although seeking to awaken audiences to the threat of mechanization and the dangers of technology run amok, Chaplin's humor tended to soften the film's satirical edge, turning horrifying scenes such as the one in which his lead character is literally caught in the great, grinding gears of the American machine into a sort of filmic joke.

The end of World War I saw the first wave of films that questioned whether the political benefits of military conflict warranted the human costs of war. Griffith's *Hearts of the World*, King Vidor's *The Big Parade*, and Lewis Milestone's *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930), for example, sought to depict the horrors of war. Significantly,

while World War II generated the production of a mass of films portraying Americans fighting and dying in “just wars,” U.S. involvement in Vietnam would once again give rise to antiwar pictures, such as Robert Altman’s *M*A*S*H** (1970); Michael Cimino’s *The Deer Hunter* (1978); Francis Ford Coppola’s *Apocalypse Now* (1979); Oliver Stone’s trilogy, *Platoon* (1986), *Born on the Fourth of July* (1989), and *Heaven and Earth* (1993); and Stanley Kubrick’s *Full Metal Jacket* (1987).

According to the American Film Institute, America’s greatest film is *Citizen Kane* (1941), a picture that audiences almost never saw simply because writer-director Orson Welles dared to repudiate the politics of newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst. Booned at the Academy Awards when Orson Welles shared the Oscar for writing with Herman J. Mankiewicz, the thinly veiled critique of Hearst’s machinations spawned a battle that initially overshadowed the film. Proclaiming that people will think “what I tell them to think,” Hearst, who served briefly in Congress, attempted to buy up every *Citizen Kane* negative in order to have them burned. He also sought to smear Welles as a communist and to blackmail theater owners and members of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences into shutting the film down. Fortunately, Hearst’s attempts to silence Welles failed.

Oddly enough, less than a decade before he tried to strong-arm Welles, Hearst had produced *Gabriel over the White House* (1933), a film that began with the Archangel Gabriel visiting corrupt, do-nothing President Judson C. Hammond (Walter Huston) while Hammond is in a coma after a car accident. Awakening from his coma, Hammond becomes an advocate of federal support for unpaid veterans and unemployed workers (an ironic twist since Hearst’s newspapers had actually condemned the Bonus Marches carried out by veterans in 1932). Because Congress does not share his divinely inspired animosity toward “honest graft,” the president threatens martial law and implements a public works program to put unemployed white men back to work. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who could not establish a paramilitary force to overcome the “technicalities of the law,” nevertheless liked the film, especially the rather explicit allusions to his New Deal programs: images of the distribution of large sums in stimulus funding, farm subsidies, and requiring banks to maintain deposit insurance.

The Great Depression also inspired *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940), John Steinbeck’s story of how Tom Joad’s (Henry Fonda) poverty led him to a government farm cooperative in California, and *Stagecoach* (1939), a John Ford Western that condemned bankers and made John Wayne famous. In the 1940s, Hollywood took on fascism and party hacks again, alluding to Nazi domination in *Casablanca* (1942) and nostalgically lauding the League of Nations in *Wilson* (1944). After *Citizen Kane*, the most politically significant film of the 1940s may have been *All the King’s Men* (1949), which chronicled Willie Stark’s (Broderick Crawford) rise from “hick” to governor. Modeling Stark after Louisiana Governor Huey Long, writer-director Robert Rossen also “nod [ded] at Welles with the giant portraits of Willie Stark at rallies and the director’s addition of a ‘March of Time’ sequence” (Krutnik et al., 2007). Foreshadowing the blacklists of the 1950s, *All the King’s Men* did not make it to the silver screen until Rossen agreed to sign a loyalty oath, vowing that he was not a communist.

The 1950s failed to produce many notable political films, but 1950s politics mattered greatly to Hollywood. George Clooney's *Good Night, and Good Luck* (2005), for instance, brought the battle between Edward R. Murrow (David Strathairn) and Senator Joseph McCarthy into focus a half-century later. Using Murrow's own words and actual clips from the Army-McCarthy hearings, *Good Night, and Good Luck* highlighted both the fear that McCarthy and other red-baiters instilled in millions of Americans and the recognition that "we cannot defend freedom abroad by deserting it at home." Even after Murrow discredited McCarthy's claims about communist infiltration of military and diplomatic agencies, "association with radical causes or radical organizations could lead to dismissal, blacklisting, or even, as the case of the Hollywood Ten illustrated, imprisonment" (Krutnik et al., 2007). After Dalton Trumbo, a black-listed member of the Hollywood Ten, won an Oscar for *The Brave One* (1957) under the pseudonym Robert Rich, however, "the institutional mechanisms of the blacklist began to crumble" (Krutnik et al., 2007). Indeed, Trumbo's and Stanley Kubrick's *Spartacus* (1960) used real names in the credits and won four Oscars.

Unlike political films that validated particular viewpoints or repudiated perceived corruption and machine politics, Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove, or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1964) speculated about the future of not only the American presidency but also society itself. Bridging the gap between science fiction and political commentary, *Dr. Strangelove* envisioned an inept President Merkin Muffley (Peter Sellers) forced into nuclear war with the "Rooskies" by Dr. Strangelove (also played by Sellers), a mad scientist imported from Nazi Germany, and generals who believe that "war is too important to be left to politicians." "I can no longer sit back and allow Communist infiltration, Communist indoctrination, Communist subversion and the international Communist conspiracy to sap and impurify all of our precious bodily fluids," declares Brigadier General Jack D. Ripper (Sterling Hayden) as an explanation for why he refused to recall nuclear bombers that he ordered to invade Soviet airspace. In a similar vein, *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962) depicted the brainwashing by communists of a rising political star. Like *Dr. Strangelove*, *The Manchurian Candidate* explored the implications of democracy gone horrifically wrong.

Imitating art, democracy actually did go horribly wrong only a few years later when President Richard Nixon's aides burglarized the Democratic presidential candidate's headquarters in the Watergate hotel. The portrayal of Bob Woodward (Robert Redford) and Carl Bernstein's (Dustin Hoffman) investigation into the Nixon Administration's transgressions in *All the President's Men* (1976) drove home the message that politics is a dirty business. Moving Hollywood from science fiction to political realism, *All the President's Men* "followed the money" to men in the White House who suddenly appeared vulnerable and petty. *Primary Colors* (1998) examined the frailty of another presidential candidate, Governor Jack Stanton—a character clearly based on Bill Clinton. All too human Stanton, played brilliantly by John Travolta, seeks to insure the loyalty of campaign manager Henry Burton (Adrian Lester) by explaining to him that his intentions make him different from those "willing to sell their souls, crawl through sewers, lie to people, divide them, play on their worst fears . . . just for the prize." Ironically, though, Stanton's most trusted operative, Libby Holden (Kathy Bates),

commits suicide when she learns that Stanton and his wife Susan (Emma Thompson) will do almost anything to win the presidency.

Nearly all American political films have featured presidents who are “white, male and wealthy/privileged/middle class (itself an accurate reflection of elitist tendencies in national politics in America down through the ages)” (Scott, 2000). In the handful of films that feature women or minority presidents, the presidency only devolved from a white man to an African American or a woman by accident or for comic relief. Senator Douglas Dilman (James Earl Jones), for instance, accidentally became president in *The Man* (1972) after the president and speaker of the house died and the vice president was incapacitated; President Beck (Morgan Freeman) appeared only briefly in *Deep Impact* (1998) to announce the end of civilization as we know it; Mays Gilliam (Chris Rock) rose from disgraced former alderman to president in *Head of State* (2003) after the president and vice president’s planes crash into each other; and Vice President Kathryn Bennett (Glenn Close) never officially became president in *Air Force One* (1997), simply because President James Marshall (Harrison Ford) refused to resign, even though his plane had been hijacked and his wife and daughter taken hostage. Significantly, then, critics could cite few precedents in cinematic history for Barack Obama’s inauguration as the first African American president in 2009.

In *The American President* (1995), Andrew Shephard (Michael Douglas), the exemplar of the naive, liberal, white-male president, is transformed from innocent hack to “toughened political operator” after falling in love with lobbyist Sydney Ellen Wade (Annette Bening). In a climactic rebuke of his opponent Senator Bob Rumson (Richard Dreyfuss), Shephard, who now, perhaps unfortunately, understands the realities of the political process, declares, “Bob’s problem isn’t that he doesn’t get it. Bob’s problem is that he can’t sell it!” (Some speculated that *The American President* may have inspired Barack Obama’s speechwriters in their attempts to portray their candidate as the better choice for chief executive: “It’s not because John McCain doesn’t care,” suggested Obama as he accepted the Democratic nomination, “It’s because John McCain doesn’t get it.”)

Wag the Dog (1997) and *Bulworth* (1998) both rejected the Capraesque sensibilities of *The American President* in order to satirize media exposure, sex scandals, and campaign finance. In *Wag the Dog*, a disturbing dark comedy, when the president is accused of propositioning a “Firefly Girl,” his consultant, Conrad Brean (Robert De Niro), decides that he needs at least the “appearance of a war” to divert the public’s attention so that he can win reelection. The picture actually became “a zany parody of the blurring of fact and fiction” when reports of President Bill Clinton’s affair with Monica Lewinsky broke shortly after the film’s release and Clinton bombed Kosovo in 1998 (Foy, 2008). Although Senator Jay Bulworth (Warren Beatty) did not have a similar counterpart making headlines, *Bulworth* attacked money in politics as acerbically as *Wag the Dog* condemned cable news and commercials for having “destroyed the electoral process.” After hiring a hitman to kill him, Bulworth changes his mind and raps about corporate influence. Perhaps the best political film to this point in the twenty-first century has been *V for Vendetta* (2005), which reminded Americans disturbed by President George W. Bush’s push to invade Iraq, warrantless wiretapping, and black

sites for torture that “people should not fear their governments; governments should fear their people.”

Films such as *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, *The Birth of a Nation*, *Citizen Kane*, and *Dr. Strangelove* have sought to justify contemporary viewpoints, renounced political techniques considered beyond the pale, and conjured up every president’s worst nightmares. Voting and elections have always loomed large in the American experiment, and the results, at least in the movies, have not always been flattering. Demagogues, political bosses, and propagandists have time and again attempted to seduce the American people into electing foxes to guard the henhouse. Inept presidents have threatened nuclear war and invaded other countries on the basis of unsubstantiated rumors and questionable motives. Yet, in a powerfully redemptive way, films about American politics have provided audiences with happy endings and enduring heroes. Although *Mr. Smith* screenwriter Sidney Buchman was blacklisted and coerced into testifying before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) that he had been a member of the Communist Party in the 1930s, in Capra’s film, Mr. Smith is vindicated after Senator Joseph Payne (Claude Rains) has a crisis of conscience and nearly commits suicide (Neve 1992, 40–41). The Hollywood patriot, it seems, has only to “get up off the ground” for the antagonist to admit that “Every word that boy said is the truth!” If only politics were that simple.

See also: Documentary, The; JFK; Nixon

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—Alan Kennedy-Shaffer

PRODUCT PLACEMENTS. Product placements have imprinted American culture, from influencing purchasing habits—an alien’s love of Reese’s Pieces in *E. T.* (1982) increased that product’s sales by 70 percent (Segrave, 2004)—to providing iconic pop-culture phrases, such as “eat your Wheaties” in *Rocky III* (1982). Product

placement is the intentional inclusion of any type of advertising in an entertainment film (Segrave, 2004). To be sure, product placement was used at least as early as the 1920s; but its usage was relatively insignificant until the late 1970s. Although advertisers quickly recognized the power of movies to shape consumer purchases, the film industry tried to limit its use, because of fear that such commercialization would repel audiences, corrupt the art of filmmaking, and thereby negate the industry's goals.

Developments in the post–World War II era, however, eroded the industry's resistance to product placement. Increasingly, directors wanted their films to convey a sense of realism, but this was an expensive task unless real props were donated by advertisers eager to have their products displayed in a film. The inclusion of advertising became an integral component of film production, not only as a source of inexpensive props but also to help fund rising production and promotional costs (and, as advertising, product placement was not as obtrusive as other types of film advertisements). Indeed, not only could advertisers be charged for product placement, they could also be used to provide free marketing, as they often developed advertising campaigns tied to their products that were included in films. The film industry, then, due largely to these factors, as well as economic troubles experienced in the late 1970s, ended its resistance to product placement.

Since the late 1970s, the trend has been toward an increase in both the use of product placements and the level of their obtrusiveness—literally turning film screens into live billboards—reflecting the growth of America's consumer culture (Segrave, 2004). It has been argued that since 1945, consumerism has shifted in emphasis from the accumulation of material goods toward the consumption of ephemeral experiences—what may be classified as experiential consumerism (Blaszczyk, 2009). Products used in movies, then, are linked to the widely diverse, usually extraordinary experiences of the filmic characters, suggesting that the purchase of these products will allow us to transcend our own, more banal workaday worlds.

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—Mark D. Popowski

PRODUCT TIE-INS. A fundamental economic element of the film industry, product tie-ins are representative of the process whereby a business pays a fee in order to create a marketing campaign around a film. In this way, the profiles of both the film and the company's product(s) are raised. For example, a company such as General Mills that sells cereal places the images of movie characters on its cereal box and a toy related to the movie inside the box, thus capitalizing on the movie's popularity. Product tie-ins, then, if successful, are beneficial for all parties involved.

Generally, a tie-in campaign follows the process of placing a product in a film. For the James Bond picture *Die Another Day* (2002), for instance, Ford Motor Company

supplied the vehicles used in the movie—in other words, they placed their product—and then tied the film with their vehicles to a broader advertising campaign. It is not always possible to place a product in a movie, however, and, oddly enough, for successful film franchises, it is not even necessary to place products. In 2005, for example, the producers of *Star Wars: Episode III—Revenge of the Sith* negotiated tie-in deals with both Burger King and M&Ms, despite the fact that neither of the company's products appeared in or was ever mentioned in the film. In such cases, then, companies try to attach their products to a film's "brand."

While most modern tie-in deals are connected to films, early tie-in contracts tended to be negotiated between companies and individual actors. In 1932, for example, Owl Cigars signed a \$250,000 tie-in contract with United Artists, allowing the company to create an advertising campaign around actor Paul Muni, who played the title character in *Scarface*, Tony Camonte, who smoked the company's brand of cigars. From here, film studios began to establish relationships with companies that produced so-called "sin products," mainly alcohol and tobacco. Company heads quickly realized that having stars use their products in movies, and then showing these stars using those products in ads, helped to legitimize commodities that were generally looked down upon. Eventually, however, stars worried that tie-ins damaged their credibility as actors, and they began turning down lucrative advertising deals. It was at this point that studios, seeking to reduce production budgets, began to strike tie-in deals with companies eager to place their products, or at least to connect them to high-profile films. Such deals appealed to advertisers, as attaching their products to films not only offered the possibility of increased exposure for whatever commodity they produced, but also maintained at least tangential connections to the actors who appeared in the films.

Today, tie-in deals are extraordinarily lucrative for both film companies and advertisers. Because such deals can be so profitable, both sides seek to lock down tie-in deals months, and sometimes even years, in advance of a film's proposed release date. Striking such deals can put advertisers in a difficult position, though, as production delays can push back release dates and make it difficult to know when to launch ad campaigns. Another very real risk for advertisers is the possibility that a movie may fail at the box office; if this happens, the company is unlikely to benefit from the tie-in campaign. In order to protect their investments, then, companies typically try to secure tie-in deals that include not just original films but also sequels, in relation to which box-office returns can be more accurately predicted. They also seek to strike deals with studios that are set to release highly anticipated pictures—the first film released in the *Harry Potter* series, for instance.

Another issue advertisers have to overcome in order to make the process successful is the increased reluctance of film stars to take part in tie-ins. Tobey Maguire, for example, who has played the lead in the *Spiderman* films, did not want his likeness used in tie-in promotions after the first movie in the series was released in 2002. As a result, all tie-in advertising images depicting Spiderman had either to show the character from behind or with his mask on. Even the use of animated characters for tie-in purposes can be contentious. As part of its tie-in with *Godzilla* (1998), for instance, Taco Bell wanted to put the image of the beast on its cups; the film's producers, however, were hesitant to allow

the image to circulate before the film was released, arguing that the impact on viewers would be lost if they knew what the updated version of Godzilla looked like.

As with advertisers who try to be as careful as possible in attaching their products to particular movies, producers are also selective about the products with which they associate their films. Cereals, fast-food chains, carmakers, national retailers, and cell phone companies are all popular partners for film producers, as they are profitably positioned in the marketplace. A good example of an advantageous deal that was struck between a studio and a popular company is that negotiated by Disney and McDonald's, who signed a 10-year contract giving McDonald's exclusive tie-in rights to all of Disney's films. Not surprisingly, companies that market products oriented toward adults tend to partner with companies that release PG-13 or R-rated films. Samsung, for example, signed a contract with Warner Bros. to tie their cell phones to *The Matrix* (1999).

Although in the end there is really no sure-fire formula for predicting which tie-in deals will succeed, both advertisers and film producers seem satisfied with the system. Indeed, as producers struggle to lower budgets and advertisers search for new ways to reach consumers in increasingly fragmented markets, it seems that product tie-ins will continue to play a significant role in the business of making movies.

See also: Product Placements

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—Sean Graham

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RELIGION AND CENSORSHIP IN FILM. Cinema emerged at a time when America wrestled with the social strains triggered by industrialization and mass culture. This struggle often pitted native-born citizens against immigrants, Protestants against Catholics, small towns against cities, and modernist Christians against Fundamentalists. From the outset, movies became embroiled in these conflicts. Traditionalists feared the potential of film to subvert the moral norms of their communities. Critics found scenes depicting violent crime and inappropriate romantic relationships especially troubling (Mitchell and Plate, 2007). As movie theatres multiplied across the nation, producers—many of them urban Jews—and distributors became the target of recurring attempts to censor offensive films. When New York City mayor George B. McClellan Jr. closed all theatres in the city in 1909 in response to widespread complaints about the indecency of the movies, a Protestant reform organization called the People's Institute established the National Board of Censorship, the first of a series of organizations designed to work with the film industry to establish acceptable standards of screen morality. Although the National Board of Censorship (renamed the National Board of Review in 1915) had no legal authority, most film producers were eager to cooperate with its efforts, welcoming a voluntary partnership with civic and religious leaders as an alternative to government censorship (Couvares, 1992).

Most Board reviewers came from urban Protestant churches, and were generally more theologically and socially liberal than church members in America's smaller towns and cities. The decentralized nature of American Protestantism meant that no set of leaders could speak authoritatively for all Christians, even within the same denomination. Despite the work of the Board, condemnation of movies continued throughout the 1910s, leading to widespread demands for legal regulation of the film industry and the creation of censorship boards by legislatures in six states (Couvares, 1992).

In 1921, following a series of Hollywood sex scandals, the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA) was established in part to handle public relations on behalf of the industry. Under the guidance of Will Hays, a Presbyterian elder from Indiana and Republican Party stalwart whose evangelical rhetoric was sometimes likened to revivalist Billy Sunday, the MPPDA aggressively cultivated religious

organizations such as the Federal Council of Churches, the YMCA and YWCA, the International Federation of Catholic Alumnae, and the National Catholic Welfare Conference, as well as civic groups such as the Boy Scouts, Campfire Girls, the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the National Education Association (Couvares, 1992). Hays pushed studios to produce noncommercial educational films for the Federal Council of Churches, and gained from reluctant producers approval for the “Eleven Don’ts and Twenty-six Be Carefuls,” a list of rules that would hopefully avoid censorship. The “don’ts” included references to childbirth, venereal disease and sexual perversion, profanity, “ridicule of the clergy,” and “willful offense to any nation, race or creed.”

These efforts at self-regulation gained support from many liberal religious leaders, but criticism of movies continued in conservative Protestant and Catholic circles. By the end of the 1920s, even liberal Protestant organs like the *Christian Century* suspected industry efforts to “manipulate” religious groups and leaned toward federal censorship laws. During the 1930s, industry efforts to avoid censorship led to more formal and systematic attempts to partner with religious organizations, particularly Roman Catholic. Hays had come to believe that Roman Catholics were less divided than Protestants on issues of morality, and that the hierarchical structure of Catholicism made it a better partner in seeking to establish uniform standards. Moreover, unlike Protestant groups, the Catholic Church adamantly opposed legislative censorship to combat immorality, instead preferring boycotts and industry efforts at self-regulation (Couvares, 1992).

In 1930, the informal “don’ts” was revised into a more sophisticated Production Code. The Code was largely the work of Father Daniel Lord, a Catholic priest and professor of drama at St. Louis University, who had served as a consultant for various Hollywood productions, including Cecil B. DeMille’s *The King of Kings* (1927). To enforce the Code, in 1934 the industry created the Production Code Administration, headed by Catholic layman Joseph Breen, who had been handpicked by Cardinal George Mundelein of Chicago (Black, 1998; Tatum, 2004). The same year, the Roman Catholic Legion of Decency appeared, to pledge Catholics across the nation to patronize approved films and to boycott movies that the Legion deemed inappropriate. In the 1936 papal encyclical *Vigilanti Cura* (“with a vigilant eye”), Pope Pius XI urged Catholics around the world to view cinema cautiously, and singled out the new American Legion of Decency for special praise (Pius XI in Mitchell and Plate, 2007).

The Production Code and the work of the Legion made it difficult for American filmmakers to produce movies that explored serious moral issues or controversial social policies, but it did successfully avert the drive toward legal censorship. It also encouraged a stream of Catholic films. During the Code’s heyday in the 1930s and 1940s, many conservative Protestants acknowledged the leadership of the Catholic Church in enforcing acceptable standards of decency (Couvares, 1992). At the same time audiences flocked to such immensely popular Oscar-winning films as *Boys Town* (1938), with Spencer Tracy as Father Flanagan, and *Going My Way* (1944), with Bing Crosby as Father O’Malley, which portrayed Catholic clergy as big-hearted champions of such traditional American values as family, sportsmanship, and entrepreneurial capitalism

(Keyser, 1984). The partnership between Hollywood and the Catholic Church undoubtedly helped to weaken native Protestant prejudice toward Roman Catholicism.

After World War II, the Production Code and the Legion declined in influence (Black, 1998). In 1945, Eric A. Johnston took over Will Hays's position at the MPPDA. Johnston was more interested in fighting the Cold War and expanding American film distribution overseas than wrangling over morality. Hollywood, facing heavy competition from television, sought to expand foreign distribution of American movies, in markets where audiences were accustomed to more complex films than the Production Code allowed. At the same time, the United States opened the gates to a flood of foreign films, including Rossellini's *Open City* (1945) and *Paisan* (1946), and Vittorio De Sica's *The Bicycle Thief* (1948). Although these films violated the standards of the Production Code, the Legion of Decency mounted only lukewarm opposition. In the case of *Open City*, a film about the liberation of Rome from the Nazis that enjoyed Vatican support, the Legion remained silent. Throughout the 1950s, reformist elements within the Catholic Church pushed for greater openness to modern culture. In a 1957 encyclical, Pope Pius XII spoke much more favorably of cinema than Pius XI had 20 years earlier. The reformist ecumenical council Vatican II (1963–65), with its sweeping accommodation of modernity, signaled the end of an era. In 1965, the Legion of Decency changed its name to the less militant National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures, and three years later, in 1968, Hollywood replaced the Production Code with the rating system.

Since the end of the Production Code, American Christians have continued to divide in their response to Hollywood (Medved, 1992; Hulsether, 1999). Conservative Catholics and Protestants frequently mount boycotts of objectionable films, such as the 2006 campaign against *The Da Vinci Code* (which suggested a secret marriage between Jesus Christ and Mary Magdalene). But these boycotts have had little impact on the industry. Religious liberals maintain a more positive stance toward Hollywood, and often praise the very films that conservatives oppose. Catholic priest and sociologist Andrew Greeley, for example, has called cinema the most sacramental of art forms, and has argued that Hollywood spreads core Christian teachings more effectively than the institutional Church (Greeley, 1988).

See also: Religion and Nationalism in Film

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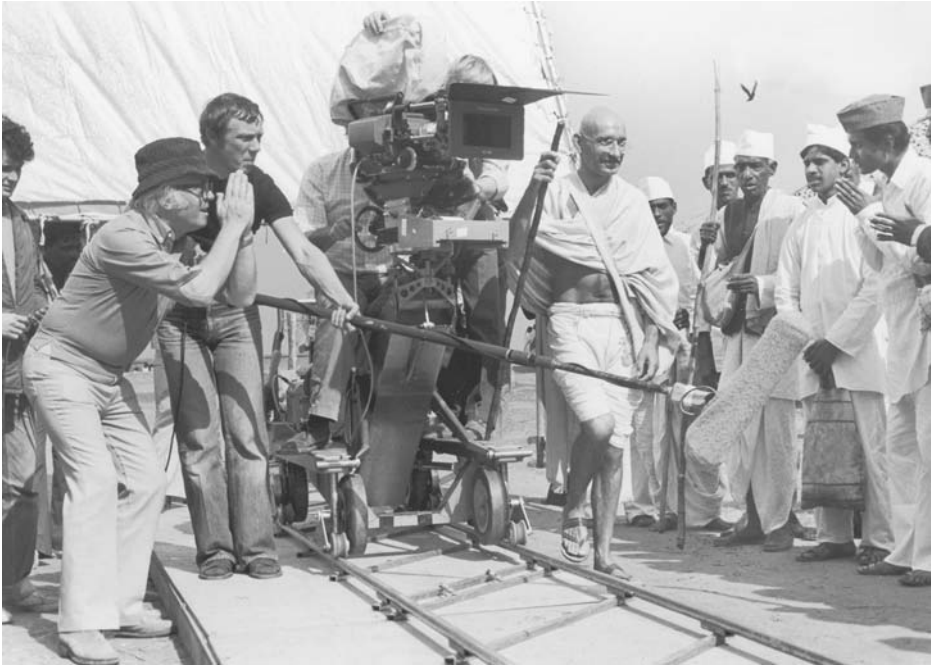
—James Rohrer

RELIGION AND NATIONALISM IN FILM. Since the emergence of motion pictures, filmmakers have frequently turned to scripture and religious traditions for inspiration. Biblical references appear commonly in films of every genre, including those that are not explicitly about religion. For example, in *The Matrix* (1999) Keanu Reeves plays a futuristic messiah in a holy city named Zion, the biblical synonym for Jerusalem. In Disney's animated movie *The Lion King* (1994), the hero is a Moses-like prince who flees his home, wanders in the desert and establishes a new life in a foreign land, and then returns to liberate his former pride from oppression after experiencing a theophany. In *Deep Impact* (1998), the president of the United States initiates Operation Noah's Ark when the world is threatened by a deadly comet. All of these movies, and countless others, center on savior figures who sacrifice themselves for others, echoing the familiar story of Jesus's sacrifice in the biblical passion narratives. Such Christ figures appear routinely in war movies, science fiction and fantasy, horror, and the quintessentially American western (Baugh, 1997; May and Bird, 1982).

The struggle between good and evil is central to many film genres. In the case of horror films, especially those that focus on demonic possession, evil is often cast explicitly in Christian terms (May and Bird, 1982). In other genres, evil may appear in the form of fascist states, militaristic aliens, or uncivilized savages. American films have often explicitly or implicitly linked the forces of good to the United States and its European allies, and to a generically Christian civilization. Conversely, colonized peoples and enemies of the United States have frequently been portrayed as evil.

This fusion of American nationalism and Christianity was especially obvious in Cold War-era Bible epics such as Cecil B. DeMille's *The Ten Commandments* (1956), which explicitly drew parallels between the ancient exodus story and the modern struggle against totalitarianism (Nadel, 1993). American nationalism and Christianity were also fused in many science fiction films of the era (Shaw, 2002), such as *Red Planet Mars* (1952) and *The War of the Worlds* (1953). In Harry Horner's *Red Planet Mars*, a California scientist (Peter Graves) establishes radio contact with Mars. The United States is initially thrown into panic when it learns that the red planet has an advanced civilization and nuclear power, but soon discovers that Mars is also a Christian society, much like America, with a "Supreme Authority" whose teachings resemble the Sermon on the Mount. This revelation sparks a religious revival in the United States but triggers revolution in the Soviet Union, where a group of peasants inspired by Voice of America radio broadcasts overthrows the communists.

In *War of the Worlds*, loosely based on H. G. Wells's famous novel, the Martians are far more sinister, mounting an invasion of earth that commences with the Western



British director Richard Attenborough (left) and his camera crew prepare to shoot a scene with actor Ben Kingsley as Mahatma Gandhi and a group of Indian extras on the set of Attenborough's film, *Gandhi*, 1982. (Columbia TriStar/Getty Images)

United States. The evil intent of the aliens is established early in the movie when Pastor Matthew Collins, holding a cross and reciting the 23rd Psalm, approaches a Martian spacecraft in an attempt to communicate the human desire for peace. The Martians vaporize the minister with a heat ray. The U.S. military then tries valiantly to defeat the invaders, only to discover that even atomic weapons are helpless in the face of the red planet's technology. Survivors of the invasion gather in a Los Angeles church to pray and await the end. Their piety is juxtaposed with scenes of the Martians blasting a church. This sacrilege immediately precedes the concluding scenes in which the invaders begin to die off from exposure to human viruses. Although the aliens are vanquished by microbes, as in Wells's novel, the religious allusions (not in the novel) point the audience to a more transcendent source of salvation. In the end, the red menace is seemingly defeated by the faith and prayers of the Americans.

The conflation of religion and American nationalism also commonly appears in the western, a genre that celebrates the transformation of the lawless wilderness into a generically Christian republic of hardworking farmers and shopkeepers. Since the earliest days of colonial America, English Protestants regarded the new world as a promised land, occupied by pagan savages and wild beasts that had to be subdued violently, like the biblical Canaanites, in order for America to fulfill its calling. This myth of conquest persisted throughout American history and powerfully shaped

popular images of the West as a place peculiarly rich with potential for wealth and human happiness, yet also disordered and in need of redemption.

In the classic western, civilized men and women must overcome the evil forces of chaos before they can enjoy the fruit of the earth. The evil confronts them in the form of savage Indians, lawless bandits, monopolistic cattlemen, and raw nature. Although eventually the land will be fenced and filled with towns, schools, and churches, the initial confrontation with evil requires the mediation of a man of violence, who, like an avenging angel, meets evil on its own ground and defeats it with overwhelming force.

The classic western savior appears most famously in *High Noon* (1952) and *Shane* (1953), but the essentially biblical roots of the myth are made most explicit in Clint Eastwood's *Pale Rider* (1985). Eastwood's plot pits a small hamlet of independent miners against a powerful tycoon and his henchmen. In the opening scenes, we see through the eyes of a little girl named Megan the brutal slaying of several neighbors. The murderers also shoot the little girl's pet dog, which she buries beneath a crude wooden cross made of sticks. Sinking to her knees, she asks God for a miracle. The camera then pans to a distant mountain, and a lone rider who descends as though from the clouds. Wearing a clerical collar, the mysterious stranger is known only as "preacher." Mobilizing the frightened miners to defend themselves against the murderous gunmen, he leads them with deadly efficiency into combat. At the end of the movie, with justice exacted and evil vanquished, the "preacher" rides back up the mountain and seemingly into the clouds, suggesting the ascension of Christ (Greeley, 1988; Scott, 1994; Baugh, 1997).

During the 1920s and 1930s, Hollywood produced a stream of successful films lauding the British Empire, many of them focused on India's Northwest Frontier. Like the Western, these empire films portrayed European colonizers as agents of civilization and morality, confronting native people who were mired in superstition and prone to acts of irrational violence (Jaher and Kling, 2004). Movies such as *The Lives of a Bengal Lancer* (1935), *Wee Willie Winkie* (1937), *The Drum* (1938), *The Four Feathers* (1939), and *Gunga Din* (1939) presented American audiences with caricatured misrepresentations of Asian religious traditions that left no doubt of their incompatibility with Christian morality nor of the essentially benign influence of colonialism.

Gunga Din, directed by George Stevens—who later directed the classic western *Shane* as well as the Jesus film *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (1965)—follows the exploits of three British soldiers and their loyal *bhisti* Din. Although a poor heathen by birth, Din has a deep longing to become a British soldier, and he emerges as the savior figure who sacrifices his own life to rescue the soldiers from the vicious army of "Thugees," led by a sinister guru who resembles contemporary Western caricatures of Gandhi. The Thug master and his followers are introduced as devotees of "Kali, the goddess of blood," the "most fiendish band of killers that ever existed." While they are gathered in their temple, the guru at one point enjoins his followers to "kill for the love of killing." The contrast with the British is made plain by Cutter, a captured soldier, who when commanded to "grovel" before the guru replies, "I'm a soldier of Her Majesty the Queen. I don't grovel before any heathen." At the close of the movie, after Kali's worshippers have been vanquished, the soldiers gather to remember the fallen Gunga Din, who looks on joyfully from heaven, his loincloth and *chaddar* now exchanged for a British uniform.

Steven Spielberg and George Lucas may have had *Gunga Din* in mind when they produced the second of their blockbuster *Indiana Jones* films. Having defeated the Nazis and affirmed the God of Abraham in *Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981), in the subsequent *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984) the heroic Jones confronts a depraved Thuggee Cult, whose “Temple of Doom” is dedicated to Kali. Underscoring the blood thirst of the Hindu goddess, the film depicts the enslavement of children, a heart ripped out of a man’s chest, and the near immolation of a sacrificial victim by the evil Indian fanatics.

Hollywood has similarly misrepresented colonized Muslim peoples, and more recently the people of independent Islamic states. For example, with only a handful of exceptions, the more than 900 Hollywood films that represent Arabs present an almost uniform impression of untrustworthy, scheming, greedy, and violent fanatics. From *Imar the Servitor* (1914) to *The Mummy Returns* (2001), Arabs appear as duplicitous agents of chaos. Closely paralleling the British Empire genre, more than 80 Hollywood movies portray the French Foreign Legion in North Africa as a heroic band of civilizers battling unruly natives. Although not explicitly attacking Islam, which would have violated the Production Code, these films leave little doubt that God is on the side of the French (Hart, 2001; Shaheen, 2003). In *Outpost in Morocco* (1949), for example, an army of Arab nationalists has surrounded a detail of French troops, besieging them within their fort. When the Arabs cut off the fort’s supply of water, the French soon find themselves facing death. In their hour of desperation two French officers are drawn to a crucifix on the wall of the commander’s private quarters, where together they repeat the Lord’s Prayer and submit themselves to God’s will. That night, an unexpected torrential rain miraculously saves the soldiers, who in the following scenes go on to annihilate the Arab nationalists.

Hollywood portrayals of African culture, as well as African-derived religious traditions in America, have almost uniformly pandered to popular stereotypes of the “dark continent” as primitive, superstitious, and cannibalistic (Landau and Kaspin, 2002). Voodoo is caricatured as violent and erotic “black magic,” an association that appeared in *White Zombie* (1932) and has been made in dozens of subsequent movies (Murphy, 1989). Racial tensions are barely concealed within these films, in which white protagonists find themselves threatened by blacks and the presumably evil power of their rituals. With the exception of the James Bond film *Live and Let Die* (1973), voodoo films are generally classified in the horror genre, alongside films of demonic possession. In some modern examples, such as *Angel Heart* (1987), *The Believers* (1987), and Wes Craven’s *The Serpent and the Rainbow* (1988), the filmmakers have drawn on ethnographic studies of Afro-Caribbean religion to lend an aura of authenticity to scenes of voodoo possession, yet the religion is uniformly misrepresented as one of mind control, unbridled sexuality, and murder. In *Angel Heart*, for example, white detective Harold Angel stumbles on a secret ceremony conducted by a young New Orleans mambo named Epiphany Proudfoot. Angel watches from the bushes, terrified but mesmerized, as black dancers whirl to the voodoo drums around the entranced Epiphany, who raises a chicken above her head, slits its throat with a razor, and imitates copulation and orgasm while the blood flows down over her body.

Although the colonialist association of nonbiblical religions with superstition and violence has not disappeared from American cinema, numerous post-Production Code films have challenged long-dominant stereotypes and offered a more positive view of non-Western religious traditions. In part this reflects the global process of decolonization since the end of the World War II, in part the widespread disillusionment with American militarism in the wake of Vietnam, and in part the influence of the counter-culture of the 1960s and 1970s. Perhaps, too, it reflects the massive flow of Asian immigrants into the United States during the last quarter of the twentieth century. One harbinger of change was the immensely popular television series *Kung Fu* (1972–74), which inverted the traditional western myth. The show focused on a Shaolin Buddhist priest, Kwai Chang Caine, the half-Chinese son of an American businessman in China, who wandered the Old West confronting American racism and violence, armed only with his Buddhist wisdom and skills in the martial arts. *Kung Fu* helped spark an immense demand for martial arts films in the United States, although few of them were grounded in the television show's nonviolent spiritual message.

Numerous popular movies of the 1980s and 1990s depicted Eastern religions favorably. Richard Attenborough's *Gandhi* (1982), a film with a strongly anticolonial message, presented the Hindu leader as a Christlike liberator. Similarly, *Passage to India* (1985) portrayed British colonial authorities as racist. Mrs. Moore, the heroine, is an elderly English freethinker who rejects the imperialist dogmas of her family and befriends Aziz, a gentle Muslim physician, and Professor Godbole, a Brahmin mystic, both of whom recognize in her a kindred soul. In *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* (1991), Morgan Freeman plays a devout Moor named Azeem who is better educated and more moral than the Christians of medieval England. *Little Buddha* (1994), directed by Bernardo Bertolucci, gave American audiences a sympathetic if simplistic introduction to the story of Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha, as told by a Tibetan Lama who has traveled to Seattle in search of his reincarnated former teacher. In 1997, Hollywood released two popular movies about the childhood of the Dalai Lama, Jean-Jacques Annaud's *Seven Years in Tibet* and Martin Scorsese's *Kundun*.

Since the 1970s, Hollywood has also presented a far different image of the clash between Euro-Americans and Native Americans. Although often lapsing into simplistic sentimentality, movies such as *A Man Called Horse* (1970), *Little Big Man* (1970), *The Emerald Forest* (1985), *The Mission* (1986), *Powwow Highway* (1989), *Dances with Wolves* (1990), *At Play in the Fields of the Lord* (1991), *Thunderheart* (1992), *The Last of His Tribe* (1992), and Disney's animated *Pocahontas* (1995) critique Anglo-American colonialism and portray aspects of indigenous spirituality with sympathy.

See also: Religion and Censorship in Film

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—James Rohrer

REPRESENTATIONS OF DISABILITY IN FILM. Characters with disabilities and disability-related themes have appeared far more often in American movies than is usually noted. The *American Film Institute Catalog of American Films* lists thousands of characters in thousands of movies: blind and amputee and wheelchair-riding war veterans; crime story villains and horror film monsters who are maimed or deformed or "insane" or in some other way disabled; self-pitying blind people and bitter paraplegics as well as inspiring strivers who triumph over their assumed limitations; blind women threatened by unseen assailants; and many others. Why has "disability" so often drawn the interest of both American filmmakers and movie audiences?

There seem to be two reasons. Throughout history, disability has been a common experience. Current demographic data estimate that one in six Americans has a disability with a major impact on life activities. As a result, disability has been virtually a constant societal issue throughout the modern era. Second, disabled people's presence and the social problem of disability have bumped up against American values and concerns, especially regarding notions of individualism and autonomy, self-control and self-making, and gender. Three sets of examples will illustrate how movies have taken up disability as a social problem.

Films about disabled veterans implicitly addressed anxieties about their social reintegration. World War II-era films—*Pride of the Marines* (1945), *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946), *Till the End of Time* (1946), *The Men* (1950), and *Bright Victory* (1951), for example—made this a major theme. All of these films reflect attitudes that both honored and feared disabled veterans as heroes as well as misfits (Gerber, 2000). Social commentators and rehabilitation professionals warned that physical and psychological injuries might bring disorder to homeland society. *Best Years* dramatized that ambivalence in a powerful way. Homer Parrish, a double-amputee Navy veteran, is courageous and coping, yet dependent and menacing. The movie also reflects contemporary rehabilitation ideology. In particular, professional advice and media reportage



Scene from the 1951 film *Bright Victory*, directed by Mark Robson. (Photofest)

made women responsible for caring for and supporting disabled men's psychological and social reintegration. That message is central to the narrative structure of *Best Years*, especially in regard to the way Homer's relationship with his fiancée is defined. *Best Years* also depoliticizes the novel on which the film was based, replacing the narrative focus of prejudice against disability with a filmic drama that centers on individual psychological adjustment. All of the movies mentioned here portray disability as mainly a matter of intra- and interpersonal coping. Significantly, themes of maladjustment, social alienation, troubled reintegration, remasculinization, and restoration to society once again appeared in cinematic offerings when films about the Vietnam War began to be made in the 1970s. Films such as *Coming Home* (1977), *Cutter's Way* (1981), *Born on the Fourth of July* (1989), *Scent of a Woman* (1992), and *Forrest Gump* (1994), for example, all used disability as a metaphor for the moral and social maiming of America as a result of our participation in a profoundly destructive, and in the case of Vietnam, wholly unpopular war.

Other movies depicted disability as a personal, familial, and societal burden that should be relieved by the voluntary or involuntary elimination of individuals with significant disabilities. *Where Are My Children?* (1916), a pro-eugenics message film, describes children with disabilities as "Unwanted Souls," while *The Black Stork* (1915) depicts physical and mental "defectives" as promiscuous, menacing, and criminal to make its case for eugenic sterilization of disabled adults and euthanizing disabled infants. Eugenic themes have been central to many science fiction movies. *Gattaca* (1997), for instance, depicts a future society in which congenitally genetically inferior

people and people with acquired disabilities are discriminated against. A paraplegic wheelchair rider was born genetically superior but sustained a spinal cord injury in a car accident. Having lost his status and identity, he devalues himself just as society devalues him. After selling his genetic makeup to a man born an invalid, he does the honorable thing, committing suicide.

Some movies directly or indirectly advocated mercy killing, suicide, or assisted suicide of people with disabilities. From early on, certain films portrayed paraplegics as rightfully ending their presumably mangled lives: *Doctor Neighbor*, *A Law for the Defective* (1915), *What Would You Do?* (1920), *The Crime of Dr. Forbes* (1936), *The Sacred Flame* (1929), and *The Right to Live* (1935) are examples. In *On Borrowed Time* (1939), death's emissary persuades an old man who rides a wheelchair (Lionel Barrymore) that death will be a merciful release for his grandson who, after an accident, will "never walk again." When he touches them, both the boy and the old man die instantly, then stand and walk toward the light in the distant sky, excited and happy. Other movies present suicide as an escape from blindness and epilepsy: for example, *The Light That Failed* (1916, 1923, 1939), *'night, Mother* (1986). Several movies reflect the later "right to die" debate by propagating the view that quadriplegics' lives are unendurably burdensome to themselves and society: *Act of Love* (1980), *Whose Life Is It, Anyway?* (1982), and *Million Dollar Baby* (2005), for instance.

Asserting that disabled people are socioeconomic burdens, some movies pitted them against other disadvantaged social groups. *The Black Stork* shows actual mentally and physically disabled inmates at the Chicago State Hospital lounging on the parklike grounds while poor, nondisabled children starve in the slums. *Whose Life Is It, Anyway?* has an African American hospital orderly complain, "we are spending thousands of dollars a week to keep [Ken Harrison] alive," when for a few pennies we could save the lives of African children by vaccinating them against measles. One of the most powerful filmic expressions of the argument for euthanizing a disabled person as both an act of mercy for a hopeless victim and something that will remove a societal burden is *Of Mice and Men* (1939, 1981, and 1992). A "feeble-minded" muscular giant, the unintentionally violent Lenny, not only burdens his pal and protector George; he destroys the realization of an economic dream that would have provided monetary security for a number of farm workers trapped in the Great Depression.

Of Mice and Men reflected the early twentieth-century campaign against "the menace of the feeble-minded" propagated by medical professionals who described them as violently criminal and sexually promiscuous or predatory (depending on their gender) and who demanded their institutionalization, sterilization, or elimination. Many movies produced during the first half of the twentieth century feature feeble-minded male villains, many of whom are sexual predators: *Out of the Fog* (1919), *Where's Mary?* (1919), *The Broken Gate* (1920, 1927), *Forbidden Valley* (1920), *Calvert's Valley* (1922), *Black Lightning* (1924), *The Lodge in the Wilderness* (1926), *Scarlet Empress* (1934), *The Corpse Vanishes* (1940), *A Man Betrayed* (1941), for example. It is arguable that the Creature in the many Frankenstein movies represents eugenic stereotypes of the dangerous feeble-minded male. In the late twentieth century, mentally disabled men were often depicted as monsters and villains in horror, science fiction, and

exploitation movies such as *A Bucket of Blood* (1959, 1995), *Faster Pussycat! Kill! Kill!* (1965), *The Gruesome Twosome* (1968), *The Incredible Two-Headed Transplant* (1971), *Monstrosity* (1988), *The Lawnmower Man* (1992); and postwar Westerns such as *Wagonmaster* (1950), *The Gunfight at Dodge City* (1959), *The Deadly Trackers* (1973), and *True Grit* (1969) featured menacing feeble-minded outlaws. Somewhat ironically, at least two major dramas used mentally disabled characters to make their very serious points: *The Young Savages* (1961) critically examines the consequences of slum conditions on Puerto Rican street gang members, one of whom is a violent “mental defective”; and in *Deliverance* (1972), four urbanites canoe down a southern river intending to get back to nature but discover instead that nature can be vicious, an idea that is ominously symbolized by a retarded, albino banjoist and a quadriplegic boy with cerebral palsy.

While many mentally disabled characters display their internal disorder by acting out violently, some manifest their inability to control themselves or their situation because they are victims of exploitation. Female characters may be victims of sexual exploitation, sexually promiscuous, or both, as seen in films like *Fanchon the Cricket* (1915), *The Arizona Cat Claw* (1919), *Foolish Wives* (1922), *Blackboard Jungle* (1955), *Gigot* (1962), *The Hustler of Muscle Beach* (1980), *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle* (1992), *Lost in Yonkers* (1993), *About Sarah* (1999), and *Happy Face Murders* (1999).

A counter-image, with a long history, depicted mentally disabled people as holy innocents or holy fools, individuals whose simplicity and guilelessness unconsciously reflect what really matters in life. Often they serve as the means to redeem nondisabled characters from self-centeredness, as depicted in films such as *Rain Man* (1988), *One Special Victory* (1991), *Two Over Easy* (1991), and *Forrest Gump* (1994). *The Green Mile* (1999) even presents a mentally disabled character who at first seems to fit the stereotype of the huge, violent, sexually predatory male, but who is revealed to be a childlike innocent whose presence humanizes his death row guards. At the same time, he has miraculous healing powers. While those traits are positive in comparison to the traditional extremely negative stereotypes, they also act to deny him of his ordinary, “normal,” humanity.

The dependent disabled person as a vehicle for a selfish, nondisabled person’s moral redemption is a mainstay of many other movies. Most notable are the 56 live-action and 15 animated theatrical and television versions of *A Christmas Carol* produced between 1901 and 2009 by U.S. and British Commonwealth film companies. *Rain Man* (1988) is an adaptation of the same plot: helping his idiot savant brother works to humanize a greedy, self-centered man.

Films such as *Charly* (1968), *The Mind of Mr. Soames* (1970), and *Color Me Perfect* (1996), present a medical solution that appears to allow for the social integration of people with mental disabilities; but in all of these stories, the cures prove to be temporary and the situations end up being sentimentally tragic. During the latter half of the twentieth century, a vigorous advocacy movement fought prejudice and discrimination, demanded appropriate education, and asserted the capabilities and rights of people with mental disabilities to community participation. One of the first films to reflect

this new perspective was *A Child Is Waiting* (1962), a didactic social drama about a progressive school. A great many such movies followed, most of them made for television. Films like *Andy* (1965), *A Special Kind of Love* (1978), *Kids Like These* (1987), *Bonds of Love* (1992), *Jonathan: The Boy Nobody Wanted* (1992), *The Yarn Princess* (1992), *Behind the Mask* (1999), *The Loretta Claiborne Story* (1999), and *The Other Sister* (1999) not only focused on children, but also depicted innocent, childlike adults who represented the opposable others of the sexually predatory, menacing, feeble-minded males. A few films, such as *Like Normal People* (1979) and *No Other Love* (1978), actually portrayed mentally disabled people as capable of romance, sexual self-expression, and marriage. Two of the most powerfully affecting of these types of films were the TV movies *Bill* (1981) and *Bill: On His Own* (1983). Based on the life of Bill Sackter (Mickey Rooney), who spent 44 years imprisoned in an institution and then learned to live in the community, these films reflected a contemporary deinstitutionalization movement that actively worked to reverse the early twentieth-century "menace" campaign.

If many movies portrayed disability as a social problem, many more indirectly reflected cultural anxieties about disability and people with disabilities as threats to basic American values and identities. Disability as the cause and/or consequence of internal moral and psychological disorder appeared in every movie genre, and a socially threatening lack of control was a key trait of "bad guys" with every type of disability. There were menacing albinos (*The Life and Times of Judge Roy Bean*, 1972; *The Eiger Sanction*, 1975); malevolent amputees (*The Unknown*, 1927; *Peter Pan*, 1953; *Charade*, 1962; *Lonely Are the Brave*, 1962); and threatening asthmatics (*Experiment in Terror*, 1962; *Blue Velvet*, 1988). Some villains walked with canes or crutches (*Queen Kelly*, 1931; *The Lady from Shanghai*, 1947; *Touch of Evil*, 1957; *Cool Hand Luke*, 1967) or had club feet (*The Birth of a Nation*, 1915; *The Mad Genius*, 1931). Others rode wheelchairs (*The Penalty*, 1920, 1941; *West of Zanzibar*, 1928; *It's a Wonderful Life*, 1947; *House of Wax*, 1955; *The Comancheros*, 1961; *Dr. Strangelove*, 1963; *Caged Heat*, 1974). Some were visually impaired (*Drums along the Mohawk*, 1939; *Dick Tracy vs. Cueball*, 1946; *They Live by Night*, 1948; *Ffolkes*, 1979), others deaf or hard of hearing (*No Way Out*, 1950; *The Big Knife*, 1955; *Some Like It Hot*, 1959; *Mirage*, 1965). There were dwarf villains (*The Unholy Three*, 1925, 1930; *Lone Wolf McQuade*, 1983) and villains with epilepsy (*The Big Sleep*, 1946, 1977). Some spoke through artificial voice boxes (*The Abominable Dr. Phibes*, 1971; *Cold Steel*, 1987; *Donnie Brasco*, 1996), or breathed through respirators (*Star Wars*, 1977, 1980, 1983). Stutterers might be killers (*Rope*, 1948), killers might be mute (*Bride of the Monster*, 1955). Siamese twins could be murderous (*Basket Case*, 1981, and its sequels; *Sisters*, 1973), "hunchbacks" were usually malevolent (*Richard III*; *The Devils*, 1971), and people with facial disfigurements were virtually always extremely violent (*Phantom of the Opera*, 1925, and its many sequels; *The Abominable Dr. Phibes*, 1971; *Halloween*, 1977, and its sequels; *Friday the 13th*, 1980, and its sequels; *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, 1991, and its sequels). Mentally ill villains can scarcely be counted (*The Beast with Five Fingers*, 1946; *The Dark Knight*, 2008). Indeed, silent screen star Lon Chaney built his career on villains with disabilities, and many of James Bond's adversaries had disabilities (*Dr. No*, 1962; *Casino Royale*,

1967; *You Only Live Twice*, 1967; *Live and Let Die*, 1973; *The Man with the Golden Gun*, 1974; *For Your Eyes Only*, 1981; *Licence to Kill*, 1989). All of these characterizations reflect the “spread effect” of prejudice: the stigmatized trait pervasively spoils the disabled person’s social identity (Goffman, 1963; Wright, 1960). Physical deformity, expressed externally, manifests internal moral, psychological, and social deviance. This dangerous deviance separates the disabled character from the community; and, in the end, makes his or her death the only acceptable solution.

Disabled characters who were not villains were often victims, whether blind (*The Blind Boy*, 1908; *A Patch of Blue*, 1965); deaf (*Johnny Belinda*, 1948; *In the Company of Men*, 1997); “hunchbacked” (*The Fox Woman*, 1915; *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, 1939 and sequels); paraplegic (*Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?*, 1962); or walking with a cane (*The Walking Stick*, 1970). Characters with disabilities were often in physical danger, from which they could not protect themselves. Autistic children were in jeopardy (*Innocent*, 1994), as were women who rode wheelchairs (*Night Must Fall*, 1937, 1964; *Eye of the Cat*, 1969). Blind women were particularly at risk (*Orphans of the Storm*, 1921; *Wait Until Dark*, 1967).

Characters with certain disabilities were typically comical figures. They stuttered (*Girl Shy*, 1924; *A Fish Called Wanda*, 1988) or lisped (*The Cable Guy*, 1996); were visually impaired (Mr. Magoo; *See No Evil, Hear No Evil*, 1989); short-statured (*The Terror of Tiny Town*, 1940); amputees (*The Cripple’s Marriage*, 1909; *Nothing but Trouble*, 1991; *Kingpin*, 1996); deaf or hard of hearing (*The Deaf Mutes’ Ball*, 1907; *New York Stories: “Oedipus Wrecks,”* 1989; *See No Evil, Hear No Evil*, 1989); or mentally disabled (*Up the River*, 1930; *Road to Morocco*, 1942; *Fat Guy Goes Nutzoid!* 1986; *There’s Something about Mary*, 1998).

Whether villainous or victimized, in danger or comical, the drama or comedy revolved around their presumed lack of control of themselves or their environment. For some characters, this put them in danger; for others, it robbed them of their dignity. Though these characters, or the situations in which they found themselves, were typically exaggerated, they reflected deep-seated cultural anxieties. Loss of control, which in American culture generally means loss of autonomy and self-sovereignty, has arguably been one of Americans’ greatest fears. Displacing that fear onto fictional disabled characters removes it to a somewhat manageable distance.

American movies have offered two solutions to disability as lack or loss of control. In the silent and early sound era, the remedy was often to find a cure. Some were effected by medical intervention, but culturally more significant were the cures disabled individuals achieved by sheer willpower. One of the most melodramatic examples is *Lucky Star* (1929), in which a disabled World War I veteran, whose wheelchair symbolizes his neutering, rises from the chair, runs using crutches, then drops the crutches to continue running, ultimately rescuing his lover.

Post-World War II movies tended to replace physical cure with prevailing psychological cures. Reflecting a rehabilitation ideology, many films used a formulaic plot: bitter, physically disabled or blind characters succumb to self-pity; but then, confronted by a rebuking friend or a crisis, realize that they can cope, and even be loved, with their disabilities. These stories became particularly common in made-for-TV

movies. *The Men*, mentioned earlier, was one of the first examples. Other notable examples are *The Stratton Story*, 1949; *With a Song in My Heart*, 1952; *Interrupted Melody*, 1955; *Ice Castles*, 1978; *The Other Side of the Mountain, Parts I and II*, 1975, 1978; and *Passion Fish*, 1992. These triumph-over-adversity tales propagate a classic American myth: success or failure depends on individual character and determination. This framing also makes disability an individual rather than a social problem, one that stems from prejudice and ignorance.

Some films did feature heroes with disabilities. They often have to counter biases: for example, the young amputee in *Freckles* (1928, 1935, 1960) and the blind and quadriplegic detectives in *Eyes in the Night* (1942; sequel *The Hidden Eye*, 1945) and *The Bone Collector* (1999). A few films briefly touch on prejudice. *Bright Victory* and *Pride of the Marines* liken bias against blind people, respectively, to racism and anti-Semitism. Other movies, such as *Freaks* (1932), *The Elephant Man* (1980), and *Mask* (1985), confront prejudice more extensively, but they often involve characters with serious and rare conditions, the kind of disabled people viewers would seldom encounter. A few later films reflect an emerging disability rights consciousness. The TV movie *The Ordeal of Bill Carney* (1981) dramatized a quadriplegic father's lawsuit for custody of his sons and depicted his disabled lawyer militantly advocating not only for that right but for his own right of public access. Two other films, *Gaby: A True Story* (1987) and *My Left Foot* (1989), based on the lives of real people with cerebral palsy, show each battling prejudice in an attempt to define themselves and direct their own lives. In contrast, *Children of a Lesser God* (1986)—an extraordinary title that powerfully expresses the possibility of society explaining away its treatment of the disabled—politically sanitized a stage play about issues around deaf versus hearing culture by turning it into a romance.

The enormous variety of filmic characterizations of one of society's most marginalized groups, it seems, reflects the complexity and contradictions involved in attaching cultural meanings to disability in America. All indicate the unsettled state of social thinking and the fragile place of people with disabilities in modern American society.

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—Paul K. Longmore

ROMANTIC COMEDY, THE. When Frank Capra's *It Happened One Night* was released in 1934, audiences were not exactly sure what it was about the film that made them feel so good, they only knew that they loved it. Most film historians point to the picture as the first of what came to be called "romantic comedies." As it turned out, the year would prove to be a pivotal one for the romantic comedy, as in addition to *It Happened One Night*, three other pictures representative of this new film genre were also released: Howard Hawks's *Twentieth Century*, starring John Barrymore and Carole Lombard, the latter in her comic debut; W. S. Van Dyke's *The Thin Man*, the first of the *Thin Man* series starring William Powell and Myrna Loy; and the Fred Astaire-Ginger Rogers vehicle *Flying Down to Rio*. It was Capra's film that made the biggest impression, however.

Intriguingly, while movies in every other film genre have evolved—westerns, war films, even musicals—romantic comedies have remained the same since they began to be made in the 1930s. Three-act offerings all, they have made us laugh and touched our hearts for decades. We all know how these narratives play out: Act One, boy meets girl (almost without exception) and they invariably dislike each other—we, however, know that they belong together; Act Two, boy and girl fall in love, but something, class differences, meddling parents, something, keeps them apart—we, however, root for them to be united; Act Three, everything is resolved, boy and girl are together (again, almost without exception)—and we are left smiling, often through tears. Why have these films remained so popular, even though audiences know exactly how they will turn out? It may be that romantic comedies are so popular precisely because we *do* know how they will turn out—the notion that, against all odds, people who are destined to be together will somehow find each other, prevail over adversity, and live happily ever after, is one that provides us with hope and comfort in an all too often uncaring world.

One thing that audiences found so appealing about *It Happened One Night* was the give-and-take between stars Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert. As film critic James Harvey puts it: "There was some new kind of energy in their style: slangy, combative, humorous, unsentimental—and powerfully romantic" (Harvey, 1987). Significantly, this wonderfully new filmic energy that passed between Gable and Colbert was one



Tony Curtis (with saxophone), Jack Lemmon (with double bass), and Marilyn Monroe in a still from director Billy Wilder's comedy *Some Like It Hot*. (Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

of the central elements of what film historians came to call the screwball comedy. Comprising a sort of sister genre of the romantic comedy, screwball comedies have the same basic narrative structure as the romantic comedy, yet the screwball variety of these pictures is marked by a number of important differences. Notable among these is the tendency for screwballs to play as farce, going so far as to make fun of romance itself. They also tend to be populated by a host of agreeably wacky characters, to unfold at a much faster pace than romantic comedies, and to reverse traditional gender roles, presenting audiences with strong, independent women who usually dominate—and often humiliate—their antiheroic male counterparts.

The screwball variation of the romantic comedy traces its roots back to the comedic cinema of the early twentieth century. Interestingly, while the figure of the heroic American male was being fleshed out in dozens of B-westerns during the first three decades of the twentieth century, during the 1910s and 1920s comedic performers such as Harold Lloyd, Buster Keaton, and Charlie Chaplin were defining the figure of the antiheroic male. Unlike the heroic westerner who confronted his circumstances and overcame them in a commanding, often violent fashion, the antihero was a victim of circumstances who, although he may have achieved a certain sort of success by the end of his adventure, would almost always have been humiliated along the way. Ironically, because Lloyd, Keaton, and Chaplin emerged as stars during the silent era, they

remained the focus of their pictures; this would begin to change, however, with the advent of sound, as now the humiliation of the antiheroic male increasingly occurred in the midst of relational moments during which hapless men were thoroughly dominated by assertive and very vocal women (Gehring, 2002).

Turning back to 1934 and *It Happened One Night*, then, the “slangy, combative, humorous” energy that passed between Gable and Colbert did seem to mark the film as a screwball comedy. Yet, although the picture is, indeed, often characterized as such, it actually appears to be much better suited to the category of the romantic comedy. This is so, it seems, because although there is a good deal of what can be characterized as orthodox screwball banter between Ellie and Peter, Capra never satirizes romance. On the contrary, he makes true love the foundational element of the narrative structure of *It Happened One Night*—Ellie and Peter must get together in the end because, quite simply, they are right for each other. Thus, *It Happened One Night* can more properly be characterized as a romantic comedy with screwball elements, rather than as a straight screwball comedy.

Audiences would have to wait until 1937 for the release of what may be characterized as the definitive screwball comedy, Leo McCarey’s *The Awful Truth*. Having cut his directorial teeth during the 1920s making dozens of shorts, McCarey was responsible for pairing Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy, creating one of the most enduring comic duos in film history. He had also worked with the Marx Brothers, W. C. Fields, and Mae West before he took on *The Awful Truth*, so he knew something about the filmic use of witty repartee. *The Awful Truth* stars Cary Grant and Irene Dunne as Jerry and Lucy Warriner, wealthy, jet-setting members of the upper crust who split up due to being jealous of each other, and then jealously attempt to sabotage each other’s relationship with a new partner so that they might get back together. Grant and Dunne are often called the best screwball team ever assembled—they would pair again as screwball leads in *My Favorite Wife* (1940)—and watching the two on-screen it is hard to argue with this assessment. Dunne is wonderfully dismissive as Lucy and Grant’s Jerry Warriner is the epitome of the long-suffering paramour. Grant’s characterization of Jerry is particularly significant, as he would go on to refine this unique screen persona and to delight film audiences with it over and over again. Grant, of course, would become one of Hollywood’s most popular, and profitable, stars, playing roles in movies that spanned diverse cinematic genres—melodramas, Hitchcock mysteries, war films—but his work as a screwball comedy leading man is certainly some of his most memorable. When one considers how attractive Grant was—stunningly handsome and oozing charm—it is somewhat amazing that he could make us believe he would ever have to play second fiddle in a relationship, and yet he does. Gable could play self-effacing characters at whom we could laugh—his Peter Warne in *It Happened One Night* is the perfect example—but he always remained in control, a point, by the way, in favor of the argument that *It Happened One Night* is a romantic comedy and not a screwball. Grant’s screwball characters, however, although they were always accomplished at whatever they did, never seemed in control of their love life—provocatively, that control was always ceded over to a woman.

Nowhere is this ceding of romantic control to the female given more powerful expression than in the Howard Hawks 1938 *Bringing Up Baby*. *Bringing Up Baby*

was actually the second of two screwballs released in 1938 that starred Cary Grant and Katharine Hepburn; the other was George Cukor's *Holiday*. Although, as it turned out, the madcap antics of Grant and Hepburn in *Holiday* appealed to 1930s audiences in a way that those in *Bringing Up Baby* did not—while *Holiday* proved to be a box-office hit, *Bringing Up Baby* was a box-office disaster—it may be argued that it was in the latter film that Grant and Hepburn mapped out a screwball relationship that not only extended the one defined by Grant and Dunne in *The Awful Truth*, but one that also provided viewers with something wonderfully unique in regard to the dominant cinematic female.

Bringing Up Baby finds renowned paleontologist Dr. David Huxley (Grant) desperately trying to bring his five-year-long struggle to reconstruct a dinosaur skeleton to a close. Set to be married to Miss Swallow (Virginia Walker), he is reminded by his betrothed that he has an appointment with an attorney at a golf course to discuss the possibility of Dr. Huxley receiving a \$1 million grant to complete his project. At the golf course, David has a jarring encounter with Susan Vance (Hepburn), who will turn out to be the figure that completely changes his life. Susan is an heiress whose extraordinary wealth and sense of privilege—she actually keeps a pet leopard, which turns out to be the “baby” in the film’s title—allow her to exist in some ethereal realm in which she remains hopelessly unaware of the world around her, although she often has a powerful impact on it. At the golf course, she insists on playing the wrong ball on the putting green—it is David’s—and driving off from the parking lot in the wrong car—which is also David’s. She waves away his protestations, finally tossing out one of the film’s most significant lines: “Your ball, *your* car; is there anything in the world that doesn’t belong to you?”

Susan’s statement is, of course, absurd—which is what makes it so funny—as she *has* played the wrong ball and *has* driven off in the wrong car, both of which do, in fact, belong to David. It is also absurdist, though, as in the moment that it is uttered, it effectively disrupts the filmic order of things—troping the dominant position of the male and refracting the notion of the reasonable. Admittedly, Grant’s Jerry Warriner in *The Awful Truth* had certainly been subordinated to Irene Dunne’s Lucy, but there is something different going on in *Bringing Up Baby*. As Harvey suggests, “Grant’s partnership with Hepburn here is different from those with the leading women in his other great comedies—with Dunne in *The Awful Truth* or Rosalind Russell in *His Girl Friday* (1940)—where he is in competition with a heroine whose wit and skills match or even outdistance his own. In *Bringing Up Baby* the hero presumes from the beginning a superiority to the ditzy heroine—of sanity and reasonableness—which turns out not to exist, or not to matter if it does. With Hepburn’s Susan he is not in competition but simply out of his depth” (Harvey, 1987).

Harvey gets this just right, as Grant’s Jerry Warriner in *The Awful Truth* is not bested by Dunne’s Lucy—nor is his Walter Burns in *His Girl Friday* bested by Rosalind Russell’s Hildy Johnson—because Jerry cannot compete with Lucy, but rather because Lucy is just a little bit better at the game than is Jerry. In *Bringing Up Baby*, however, David Huxley is never even in the game—to paraphrase a line from the latter-day romantic comedy *Jerry Maguire*, Susan had David at hello. In the end, then, he admits

that he has “never had a better time” than when, totally out of character for this button-down professor, he was cavorting with Susan; so good a time, it appears, that even when Susan destroys his precious brontosaurus skeleton, he merely sighs and says, “Oh dear, all right,” and then embraces her passionately.

Ironically, Hepburn had been labeled “box-office poison” in the years leading up to the release of *Bringing Up Baby*, an idea that is hard to fathom given her extraordinarily successful big-screen career. Early on, though, audiences did indeed turn away from some of Hepburn’s films—again, although it is now considered a cinematic classic, it is important to remember that *Bringing Up Baby* failed at the box office when it was first released. Part of what audiences found unappealing about Hepburn, it seems, was related to her frustration with a Hollywood system dominated by men, most of whom resented the attitude of this very assertive young woman. Perhaps unwittingly—and perhaps not—Hepburn’s feelings toward the men who controlled the Hollywood film industry from behind the camera often came across on-screen, leading some viewers to describe her as distant, dismissive, and controlling. Her characterization of Susan Vance in *Bringing Up Baby* is a good example of this; although at the very end of the picture—just before she destroys David’s prized dinosaur skeleton—she seems rather endearingly, even girlishly pleased to discover that David actually likes her, her behavior throughout the film has been expressive of a very different relational sensibility: if David wants to be with Susan, he will have to play by her rules. “Oh dear, all right,” one imagines David repeating over and over again during their time together.

Although audiences did flock to see *Holiday*, then, the other screwball offering of 1938 that starred Hepburn and Grant, the pictures in which Hepburn starred that actually made her a comedic success were romantic comedies, not screwball offerings. The first of these, *The Philadelphia Story* (1940), also featured Grant, along with another actor who would become a much-loved romantic comedy lead, Jimmy Stewart. Stewart—another incredibly versatile actor who played various characters spanning diverse genres who is probably best remembered for his roles in populist films such as Capra’s *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939) and *It’s A Wonderful Life* (1946)—had already warmed the hearts of audiences in *The Shop Around the Corner*, a 1940 romantic comedy directed by the brilliant Ernst Lubitsch. Lubitsch, who would go on to make a great number of very successful romantic comedies, would himself be instrumental in shaping the direction that the non-screwball comedies of the 1940s would take, helming not only *The Shop Around the Corner* but also 1939’s *Ninotchka*, which starred Greta Garbo and Melvyn Douglas.

The Philadelphia Story was adapted from a 1939 Broadway play of the same name written by Philip Barry expressly for Hepburn; Hepburn even worked with Barry for two months to get the script exactly right. A huge success on Broadway, the play explored the life of a bright, young, beautiful upper-class woman whose off-putting, elitist self-absorption is called into question by the people in her life who swirl around her, especially the men. Broadway audiences quickly realized that Hepburn’s *Philadelphia Story* characterization of protagonist Tracy Lord was, on many levels, autobiographical in its expression, something that actually worked in Hepburn’s favor, as it turned out. When the screen adaptation was released in 1940, it proved to be every bit as successful

as the stage production, effectively reviving—or perhaps more correctly, saving—Hepburn's career.

The film opens with Tracy's husband, C. K. Dexter Haven (Grant), angrily stomping his way out of their estate, bags in hand. She follows, carrying two material signs of Dexter's upper-class male privilege: his pipe holder and his golf bag. Casting the pipe holder to the ground where it smashes into pieces at her feet, she removes a club from the golf bag, hurling the latter after Dexter. In a final act of defiance, she breaks the golf club she holds over her knee—a symbolic moment of phallic rupture, perhaps—and throws these at Dexter, as well. Turning and marching back toward the door, Tracy is accosted by Dexter. Catching up to her, he raises his hand to strike her but thinks better of it; instead, he palms her face and roughly pushes her to the floor.

Two years later, now divorced from Dexter, Tracy is on the verge of marrying George Kittredge (John Howard). The unscrupulous editor of *Spy* magazine, Sidney Kidd (Henry Daniell), wants a tabloid style exposé on the wedding and decides to send his ace reporter, Macauley "Mike" Carter (Stewart)—who hates the idea—and his crack photographer, Elizabeth "Liz" Imbrie (Ruth Hussey), to bring home the story. In order to get his staff members into the Lord mansion, Kidd blackmails Dexter, threatening to reveal salacious information about Tracy's father, Mr. Seth Lord (John Halliday), if Dexter does not agree to go forward with the plan. Mike and Liz will be introduced as Dexter's good friends and, once they are inside, will subtly gather information about Tracy and her family. Tracy ultimately uncovers the plot and forces Dexter to admit his complicity. When he explains the details of Kidd's blackmail scheme, Tracy agrees to meet the *Spy* magazine intruders.

When Mike, Liz, and Tracy first encounter each other, it seems as if the narrative will play out in typical screwball fashion: Tracy sweeps into the room, loudly speaking French and imperiously introducing herself as Tracy Lord. Taken aback, Carter can barely get his words out: "I'm—I'm Mike to my friends." To which Tracy wickedly responds, "Of whom you have many, I'm sure." Tracy, always the best and the brightest in any room in which she appears, turns the tables on Mike and Liz, peppering them with questions about themselves. Although shaken by her onslaught, Mike is also enamored by this force of nature, and it is he who describes Tracy to perfection: "There's magnificence in you, Tracy . . . a magnificence that comes out of your eyes and your voice and the way you stand there and the way you walk. You're lit from within, Tracy. You've got fires banked down in you, hearth fires and holocausts!"

It is not surprising to hear Mike describe Tracy as having fires banked down in her that are holocaust-like, threatening to destroy everything in their path. Hearth fires are altogether different, though, calling to mind notions of home and family, which seem to have little to do with screwball heroines. It is difficult to imagine, for example, the female characters in screwball comedies gathered together with the members of their families around the hearth, soothing and comforting them. Certainly this would never have been the case with Lucy Warriner in *The Awful Truth*—although she and Jerry end up getting back together, there is no sense that she wishes to settle down and have children. And Susan Vance from *Bringing Up Baby*? Even after letting David into her life, it is clear that the only baby that the couple will rear is Susan's pet leopard. Why,

then, the reference to hearth fires in *The Philadelphia Story*? Interestingly, Hepburn's Tracy Lord character could be every bit as acerbic as her Susan Vance character was in *Bringing Up Baby*. And yet, with Tracy, unlike with Susan, there is a sense that there are indeed hearth fires banked down in her, something warm and comforting, if only it can be tapped. How, though, to get at this comforting core of Tracy Lord? What is required, it appears, is a narrative deconstruction of this high-handed character, a sort of filmic damping down of the holocaust flames that burn so passionately within her.

The process of cooling Tracy's holocaust fires is, for the most part, carried out by the two most important men in her life, her former husband and her father. Ironically, Tracy had good reason to divorce Dexter and to distance herself from her father. Dexter was, in fact, irresponsible, and he did drink far too much; and Seth Lord was a philanderer, constantly involving himself in embarrassing affairs with chorus girls. Yet, although there is an unsettling sense that we are to understand that the fault behind the behavior of both Dexter and Seth lies with Tracy—her father suggests that his wayward ways were due to her lack of “foolish, unquestioning, uncritical affection” for him, a result of Tracy being devoid of “an understanding heart”—there is nonetheless something important to be learned from what these men have to say to Tracy, especially Dexter. Tracy is obviously terribly attractive—there is magnificence in her, after all. Yet hers is a dangerous attraction, as she is arrogant, rude, and intolerant; and her so-called magnificence only makes things worse. Intelligence, charm, and wit are all wonderful things, suggests Dexter, but if they are used to destroy people—to burn them up, as it were—then they are useless.

In the end, Tracy learns her lessons, and she, her father, and Dexter are reunited. Audiences cheered this turn of events—the too smart, too confident woman ultimately reined in by the men in her life while being allowed to retain a restrained form of the magnificence that lies deep within her. Hepburn, it seems clear—especially given that she was instrumental in shaping both the stage and screen projects—understood the genius of this *Philadelphia Story* process. Like Tracy Lord's, Hepburn's magnificence need not be done away with, only controlled, the rough edges polished. Studio heads accomplished just this over the course of the next decade, casting her in a series of romantic comedies in which she played smart, accomplished women who are ultimately brought under control by equally accomplished men.

Capitalizing on the success of *The Philadelphia Story*, then, Hepburn was cast as Tess Harding in George Stevens's 1942 *Woman of the Year*. A streetwise, go-get-'em reporter, she falls in love with rival journalist Sam Craig, played by Spencer Tracy. The pairing of Hepburn and Tracy was inspired. Tracy had already begun to establish himself as one of the most powerful and well-loved figures in the American film industry, and audiences found it easy to believe that he was the right man to rein in the magnificent Kate. It helped, of course, that Hepburn would fall deeply, devotedly in love with Tracy, even though he was married, had children, and refused to divorce because he was a devout Catholic and, in Tracy's mind, a committed family man. The two would carry on a long-term affair, with Hepburn willingly waiting in the wings while Tracy dispensed with his familial duties. So devoted was Hepburn to Tracy that she not only accepted her role as the other woman for 27 years, but also endured Tracy's

demeaning, alcohol-induced rants. Effectively putting her career on hold to nurse Tracy through his final months, Hepburn was at Tracy's bedside when he died after being rushed to the hospital with congestive heart failure while the two were working on *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?*—even then, Tracy would acknowledge only that Hepburn had been a wonderful friend.

The relationship between Hepburn and Tracy did not negatively affect either of their careers; indeed, Hepburn became a sympathetic character in the eyes of many film fans because of what she had to endure with Tracy. The two would go on to star together in three more romantic comedies during the next decade, all of which basically repeated the storyline of *Woman of the Year*—strong women tamed by stronger men: Harold Bucquet's *Without Love* (1945), and George Cukor's *Adam's Rib* (1949) and *Pat and Mike* (1952). Audiences loved watching Hepburn and Tracy square off against each other, especially because no matter how elitist Hepburn's characters were, viewers knew that Tracy's characters would bring hers to heel.

Significantly, the filmic relationships defined by Hepburn and Tracy in these films not only harkened back to the one established by Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert in *It Happened One Night*, but they also became models for the romantic-based comedies that would follow. Although often marked by screwball moments, the romantic-based comedies characterized as romantic comedies that followed the Hepburn-Tracy films were more melodramatically sentimental, more serious about love, and overwhelmingly respected normative gender roles, with heroic men—as opposed to their antiheroic screwball counterparts—reining in difficult yet enormously attractive women so that the two could live happily ever after. Admittedly, screwballs did not disappear completely, continuing to be made throughout the 1940s, '50s, and '60s—Hawks's *His Girl Friday*, for example, with Grant and Rosalind Russell, and Garson Kanin's *My Favorite Wife*, with Grant and Dunne, in 1940; Preston Sturges's *The Lady Eve*, with Barbara Stanwyck and Henry Fonda, and George Cukor's *Two-Faced Woman*, with Greta Garbo and Melvyn Douglas, in 1941; Gregory LaCava's *Lady in a Jam*, with Irene Dunne; Leo McCarey's *Once Upon a Honeymoon*, with Grant and Ginger Rogers; and Preston Sturges's *The Palm Beach Story*, with Claudette Colbert, in 1942; Frank Capra's *Arsenic and Old Lace* in 1944; Hawks's *I Was a Male War Bride* in 1949 and *Monkey Business* in 1952, all of which starred Grant; Billy Wilder's *Some Like It Hot* in 1959, which featured Marilyn Monroe, Jack Lemmon, and Tony Curtis; and Hawks's 1964 *Man's Favorite Sport?*, with Rock Hudson and Paula Prentiss. Contemporary directors even tried their hand at the screwballs—Peter Bogdanovich, for example, with *What's Up, Doc?* in 1972, starring Barbra Streisand, Ryan O'Neal, and Madeline Kahn; Blake Edwards with *Blind Date* in 1987, starring Kim Basinger and Bruce Willis; and Charles Crichton with *A Fish Called Wanda* in 1988, featuring John Cleese, Jamie Lee Curtis, and Kevin Kline. Yet audiences, it seems, wanted something different; they wanted something more like *It Happened One Night*—films that, although they might descend at times into screwball mania, nonetheless made viewers hopeful about the possibility of falling in love.

From the 1950s on, the film industry was only too happy to oblige audience desire for romantic comedies, releasing dozens of these films from this point forward. Even

actors like Humphrey Bogart, who had made a name for himself as a rough-edged, hard-boiled detective during the 1940s, got into the picture when he was cast with Audrey Hepburn in Billy Wilder's *Sabrina* (1954). Katharine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy paired again in Walter Lang's *Desk Set* in 1957, and Wilder once again turned to Audrey Hepburn as his female lead in his 1957 *Love in the Afternoon*, casting her opposite Gary Cooper. Audrey Hepburn would also star with Cary Grant in Stanley Donen's *Charade* (1963), one of the many romantic comedies that Grant would make. Significantly, Grant was every bit as popular as a romantic comedy lead as he had been as a screwball lead, starring with Grace Kelly in Hitchcock's *To Catch a Thief* (1955), with Deborah Kerr in Leo McCarey's *An Affair to Remember* (1957), with Ingrid Bergman in Donen's *Indiscreet* (1958), with Sophia Loren in Melville Shavelson's *Houseboat* (1958), with Doris Day in Delbert Mann's *That Touch of Mink* (1962), and, as was mentioned, with Audrey Hepburn in *Charade*.

Although there will probably never be another Cary Grant, other Hollywood heartthrobs would follow in his footsteps, appearing in numerous latter-day romantic comedies. Rock Hudson, whose early career overlapped the final years of Grant's, was the first of the matinee-idol males to follow Grant. Hudson starred alongside Doris Day in a series of popular, and profitable, romantic comedies: Michael Gordon's *Pillow Talk* (1959), Delbert Mann's *Lover Come Back* (1961), and Norman Jewison's *Send Me No Flowers* (1964). He also starred with Gina Lollobrigida in both Robert Mulligan's *Come September* (1961) and Melvin Frank's *Strange Bedfellows* (1965). Early in his career, in 1967, Robert Redford starred with Jane Fonda in the Neil Simon project *Barefoot in the Park*, and then two decades later with Debra Winger in Ivan Reitman's *Legal Eagles* (1986), and then a decade after that with Michelle Pfeiffer in Jon Avnet's *Up Close and Personal* (1996); while Warren Beatty paired with Leslie Caron in Arthur Hiller's *Promise Her Anything* (1965) and with Julie Christie—his current love interest—in Hal Ashby's *Shampoo* (1975), which he co-wrote with Robert Towne, and *Heaven Can Wait* (1978), which he co-directed with Buck Henry, and then with his wife, Annette Bening, in Glenn Gordon Caron's *Love Affair* (1994), which was based on Leo McCarey's 1939 *Love Affair*. Although all of these leading men proved immensely popular with audiences, none of them reached the romantic comedy heights achieved by Grant. Interestingly, the one contemporary star who may have the looks and charm of Grant is George Clooney, although the multit talented actor has only made one romantically oriented comedy, Michael Hoffman's *One Fine Day* (1996), with Michelle Pfeiffer.

Intriguingly, ultrahandsome leading men are not the only ones who have starred in latter-day romantic comedies. Billy Crystal, for instance, starred opposite Meg Ryan in Rob Reiner's *When Harry Met Sally* (1989), which featured a Nora Ephron screenplay that explored the angst-filled situations that characterized romance during the late twentieth century. Crystal would go on to pair with Debra Winger in *Forget Paris* (1995), which he directed and co-wrote, and then in Joe Roth's ensemble *America's Sweethearts* (2001), which he also co-wrote, with Julia Roberts and Catherine Zeta-Jones. *America's Sweethearts* also featured John Cusack, who has carved out his own romantic comedy niche starring in films such as Cameron Crowe's *Say Anything*

(1989), with Ione Skye; George Armitage's offbeat *Grosse Pointe Blank* (1997), with Minnie Driver; Stephen Frears's *High Fidelity* (2000); and Peter Chelsom's *Serendipity*, with Kate Beckinsale. The always reliable Tom Hanks, who some have labeled a contemporary Jimmy Stewart, has charmed audiences in a series of box-office hits opposite Meg Ryan, including John Patrick Shanley's wacky *Joe Versus the Volcano* (1990) and the Nora Ephron projects *Sleepless in Seattle* (1993) and the *Shop Around the Corner* remake *You've Got Mail* (1998), both of which Ephron directed and co-wrote.

Perhaps the quirkiest of the contemporary romantic comedy leading men has been Woody Allen, who married his early leading lady, Louise Lasser; carried on a long-term affair with another leading lady, Diane Keaton; married yet another of his leading ladies, Mia Farrow; and who is now married to his much younger (36 years) step-daughter, Soon-Yi Previn, who had been adopted by Farrow. A dream filmmaker for Hollywood studio heads—he consistently brings his pictures in on time and on budget, and his loyal fan base assures that they always make money—Allen began directing, writing, and starring in a series of ingeniously zany comedies early in his career, all of which featured Lasser. These included *What's Up, Tiger Lily?* (1966), *Take the Money and Run* (1966), *Bananas* (1971), and *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Sex (But Were Afraid to Ask)* (1972). In 1972, he starred opposite Diane Keaton in the first of a series of romantic comedies that the two actors would make together, Herbert Ross's *Play It Again, Sam*, which Allen wrote. Allen plays the romantically inept Allan Felix, who, after going through a messy divorce, tries to get back into the dating scene. A movie buff, he fantasizes that a trench coat-clad, fedora-wearing Humphrey Bogart (played to perfection by Jerry Lacy), who only Allan can see and hear, is giving him pointers on how to handle women. Watched over in his time of crisis by his friends Dick (Tony Roberts) and Linda (Diane Keaton), who introduce him to a string of beautiful women, Allan begins to realize that he has fallen in love with Linda. After sleeping with her, which buoys his confidence tremendously, Allan comes to understand that Linda is better off with Dick, and in a re-creation of the famous closing scene from *Casablanca* he insists that they must stay together. Although he does not end up with the girl—a rare occurrence in romantic comedies—like Rick in *Casablanca*, who insists that Ilsa must accompany Victor as he goes about his life's work, Allan makes a sacrifice for a higher cause.

Having become romantically involved when they starred in *Play It Again, Sam* on Broadway, Allen and Keaton would go on to make two more offbeat comedies, *Sleeper* (1973) and *Love and Death* (1975), before they played opposite each other in Allen's landmark romantic comedy *Annie Hall* (1977). In the film, Allen plays Alvy Singer to Keaton's absolutely delightful Annie Hall, the two constituting a pair of high-strung New Yorkers who live out their almost Kafkaesque experiences looking for, and tortured by, love. After writing and directing his first serious film, the Ingmar Bergman-inspired *Interiors* (1978) which co-starred Keaton, Allen once again paired with Keaton in a romantic comedy, 1979's *Manhattan*. Here, Allen plays Isaac Davis, another high-strung New Yorker, who falls for Mary (Keaton), the mistress of his best friend Yale (Michael Murphy). Interestingly—especially given his future relationship with Soon-Yi Previn—the 42-year-old Isaac has an affair with Tracy (Mariel

Hemingway), a bright, articulate teenager who, rather ironically, ends up teaching Isaac what love is really about.

Keaton has turned out to be one of the best of the contemporary female romantic comedy leads, taking up the mantle of actresses such as Claudette Colbert, Irene Dunne, Carole Lombard, Ginger Rogers, Rosalind Russell, and the Hepburns, Katharine and Audrey. Keaton's career continued to flourish after she and Allen split, and even though she is now in her mid-sixties, she continues to make romantic comedies. In 2003, for instance, she starred in Nancy Meyers's *Something's Gotta Give*, and in 2007 in Michael Lehmann's *Because I Said So*. Her co-star in the first picture was Jack Nicholson, who was cast as an aging playboy with a penchant for young women who, in this case, falls for an older woman—one who is charming, witty, funny, and sexy. Nicholson would also star in one of the very best of the contemporary romantic comedies, James Brooks's *As Good As It Gets*. In Brooks's film, Nicholson plays Melvin Udall, an irascible, obnoxious, self-absorbed, obsessive-compulsive, terribly successful author of romance novels who falls in love with Carol Connelly (played by the approachably attractive Helen Hunt), a single mother/waitress who struggles to find love while living with her own mother and taking care of her son, who suffers from life-threatening asthma attacks. Carol initially wants nothing to do with Jack; but he works hard to change—being around Carol makes him “want to be a better man”—and although it seems as if their relationship will be a continual challenge to sustain, in the end Carol is won over. Although her character is shifted from the corner diner to the corporate boardroom, Hunt played a similar role in Nancy Meyers's *What Women Want* (2000). Cast opposite Mel Gibson, whose character Nick Marshall, another aging playboy, can suddenly hear woman's thoughts after an accident with a hairdryer, Hunt plays Darcy McGuire, a powerful, sexy, insecure advertising executive. Unexpectedly attracted to Nick, Darcy ends up teaching him—as Carol did with Melvin in *As Good As It Gets*—how to be a better man, and the two end up together.

As was mentioned earlier, after her starring role in *When Harry Met Sally*, Meg Ryan would go on to establish herself as the romantic comedy female lead of the 1990s and early 2000s. Although her dramatic films have almost all been critical and box-office disasters, Ryan has struck gold—seemingly with anyone with whom she has been cast—in her romantic comedies. Although Julia Roberts won her Best Actress Academy Award for her dramatic turn in *Erin Brockovich* (2000), she has been similarly successful as a romantic comedy female lead. After bursting on the scene in *Pretty Woman* (1990), playing a prostitute who teaches yet another man about love—in this case a corporate raider played by Richard Gere—Roberts went on to star in Charles Shyer's *I Love Trouble* (1994), with Nick Nolte; P. J. Hogan's ensemble *My Best Friend's Wedding* (1997), with Dermot Mulroney, Cameron Diaz, and Rupert Everett; Roger Michell's *Notting Hill* (1999), with Hugh Grant; Garry Marshall's *Runaway Bride* (1999), once again with Gere; Gore Verbinski's *The Mexican*, with Brad Pitt; the previously mentioned *America's Sweethearts*; and another ensemble, this one directed by Marshall, *Valentine's Day* (2010). Although it would not be surprising to see Ryan or Roberts in more romantic comedies, the most popular, and bankable, contemporary female star of the genre is surely Jennifer Aniston. Parlaying her immense popularity

on the sit-com *Friends* into an enormously successful big-screen career, Aniston has made a slew of romantic comedies during the 1990s and 2000s. These include Edward Burns's *She's the One* (1996), Glenn Gordon Caron's *Picture Perfect* (1997), Nicholas Hytner's *The Object of My Affection* (1998), Mike Judge's *Office Space* (1999), John Hamburg's *Along Came Polly* (2004), Rob Reiner's *Rumor Has It . . .* (2005), Peyton Reed's *The Break-Up* (2006), Stephen Belber's *Management* (2008), David Frankel's *Marley & Me* (2008), Brandon Camp's *Love Happens*, Andy Tennant's *The Bounty Hunter* (2010), Josh Gordon and Will Speck's *The Switch* (2010), and Dennis Dugan's *Just Go with It* (2011).

It may be fitting to close with mention of a man who shares a name with the great Cary Grant, the British actor Hugh Grant. Agreeably good-looking and boyishly charming, Hugh Grant's characters and the relationships in which they find themselves embody what is best about the romantic comedy: no matter how far away love seems, it is really just around the corner. Perhaps of all the romantic leads he has played, none is more representative of this idea than William Thacker in *Notting Hill*. A simple bookseller in the Notting Hill district of London, William is surprised to see the international film star Anna Scott (Julia Roberts) walk into his shop. Though it seems impossible to him, the beautiful, famous, wealthy Anna falls for him, and of course, he for her. Driven apart in Act Two, they are, against all odds, finally reunited by film's end. Indeed, in the final shot, we see the two lovebirds on a bench, Anna reclining back with her head on William's lap as he reads a book, her stomach gloriously swollen with their child—the ultimate romantic comedy couple . . . or, in this case, family.

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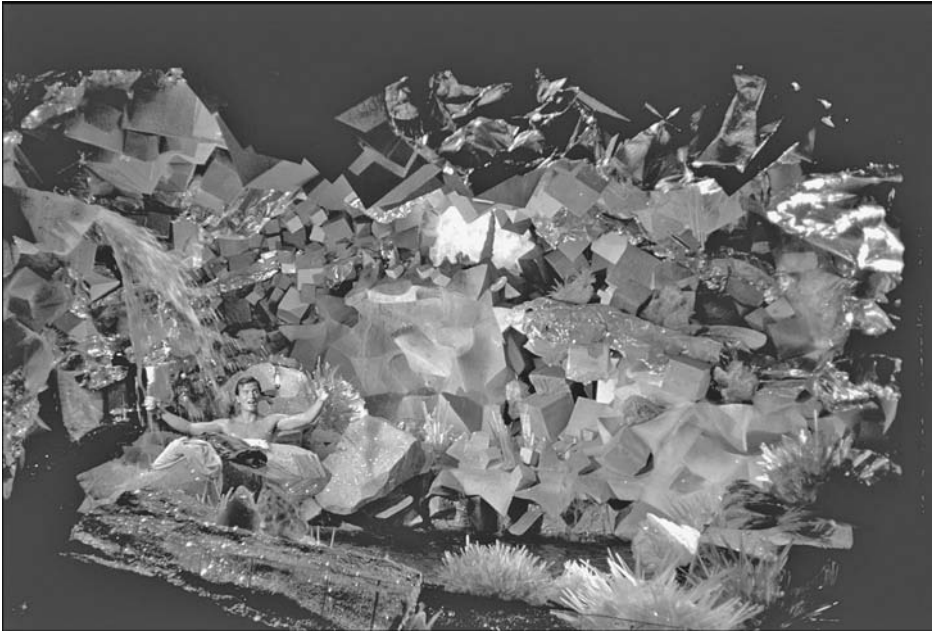
—Philip C. DiMare

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SCIENCE AND POLITICS IN FILM. There are diverse depictions of science in American film, but the overall picture is one of apprehension. This apprehension reflects the uneasy dependence of society on modern science and technology. If knowledge is power, as Francis Bacon argued, the enormous power of science has been a cause of both wonder and fear. C. P. Snow (1963) famously noted the fundamental tension between science and the humanities and the distrust of literary intellectuals for scientists. It is therefore not surprising that so many filmic representations of science have been ambiguous or even hostile, embracing a Promethean theme of hubris or a Faustian theme of blasphemy. Both themes are present in the archetypal film image of mad science, Dr. Frankenstein. Armed with superior knowledge, the mad scientist appears to be a superman, though a flawed one. He (rarely she) can challenge, change, or destroy the world. However, the scientist is also depicted as less human in other ways: moral, social, and physical. The science generated by such individuals, usually greatly simplified, is itself politically suspect. When science intersects with public policy, the primary issue is separating “good” science from “bad” science; judging which individual scientist is right and controlling the bad science.

While scientists have been depicted as heroes in American films, the archetypal image is the mad science of Dr. Frankenstein, starting with *Frankenstein* (1931). Reinforced by repetition in other media (cartoons, comics, commercials, television programs, and model kits), even those not familiar with the original films can recognize the component elements of the stereotype. Their cultural influence is so great that the conventions can be easily parodied, as in *The Nutty Professor* (1963, 1996), *Young Frankenstein* (1974), and *Back to the Future* (1985), and the most extreme example, the genre- and gender-bending *Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975). The line between horror and comedy can often be thin (Picart, 2003).

The image of mad science, evident in terms like “Frankenfood,” has also influenced political discourse on biotechnology and nuclear technology (Skal, 1998, 25). The Frankenstein film, both literal adaptations and looser variants, form the most persistent image of science in American film. Mary Shelley’s original novel is the tale of an irresponsible “modern Prometheus.” However, film adaptations also draw inspiration



Actor Pat Boone takes a shower surrounded by a crystal-like set in scene from the 1959 motion picture *Journey to the Center of the Earth*. (Time Life Pictures/Getty Images)

from medieval legends of Faust, a tragic genius profanely seeking dangerous knowledge (Haynes, 1994). In the original Universal cycle of *Frankenstein* films (starting with *Frankenstein*, 1931 and ending with *House of Dracula*, 1945), the mad doctor and his successors are driven, or possessed, by a preternatural need to experiment (the central watchword of mad science). Many are tormented by their actions but like addicts must continue nonetheless. Their experiments may mock divine power, as the Monster's creation in *Frankenstein* through the literal channeling of power from the heavens to Earth. Frankenstein, in a controversial line cut from later releases, declares "In the name of God now I know what it feels like to *be* God," marking him as a blasphemous usurper of divine authority. As with the discoveries of Galileo or Darwin, science may challenge not only the political status quo but also the religious and moral superstructure of society.

Central to the conceptualization of mad science is the scientist, typically stereotyped as white and male, and marked by the iconographic white lab coat, test tubes, thick glasses, and wild "Einstein" hair (Skal, 1998, 17; Haynes, 1994, 1). Like the alchemist Faust, the modern scientific genius wields enormous, perhaps unnatural power, and may transcend normal human limits (Schelde, 1993, 31–33). Despite this power, science, especially of the mad variety, is typically the solitary enterprise of obsessive individuals on isolated islands and mountain peaks, in jungles, ruined castles, or lonely estates. Such scientists are solitary figures on a personal journey of self-discovery or self-destruction. *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1921, 1931, 1941), *Island of Lost Souls* (1932), *The Invisible Man* (1933), *Dr. Cyclops* (1940), *The Fly* (1958, 1986), *Back to the Future*, and *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1996) exemplify this theme. Even scientific

teams, such those in *The Andromeda Strain* (1970) and *Sphere* (1998), are small and appropriately isolated.

Such physical isolation mirrors the social and often sexual isolation of scientists. Even scientist-heroes are often social misfits with poor social skills or poorer fashion sense, as in *The Lost World* (1925, 1960) or *The Fly* (1986). *The Nutty Professor* films, employing two separate sets of negative social stereotypes, show scientists whose only escape from loneliness is through mad science. Scientists often have few or weak family ties, and the scientific endeavor itself is dangerous to domestic normality (Schelde, 1993, 32). Scientists pursuing mad science become alienated from family and friends, ultimately endangering both. *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids* (1989), explores this theme more gently, but as in other films, those closest to a scientist are usually the first menaced by the results of mad science. In *Frankenstein*, the doctor's experiments keep him from his fiancée, and later the result of those experiments nearly destroys her. In *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935)—satirically in *Young Frankenstein*—the experiment literally carries the fiancée away. In *Jurassic Park* (1993), the paleontologist is happy to remain digging in the field with his (childless) botanist girlfriend, while the mathematician, clad in a black leather jacket and sunglasses like a rock-star, acknowledges his multiple failed marriages. In *Bringing Up Baby* (1938), an asexual female scientist tells her paleontologist-fiancé that the fossilized dinosaur they are reconstructing will be their “child,” as their careers will not allow the time for a real family. In other films, scientific crises parallel personal relationships in crisis. In *Outbreak* (1995), the reunion of separated biologists symbolizes the return to health of a disease-threatened society. Similar formulas occur, not always with a happy reunion, in *Altered States* (1980), *The Fly* (1986), *Sphere*, and *Twister* (1996).

Negative science generally lacks any moral restraint and disregards any notion of social responsibility. While some mad scientists entertain hopes of ultimately bettering society—as in Captain Nemo's forlorn quest to end war (*Mysterious Island*, 1961) or Dr. Totenkopf's misguided attempt to preserve wildlife (*Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow*, 2004)—mad scientists in reality pursue research with little real regard for its consequences. They may flagrantly break taboos, like Dr. Pretorius in *Bride of Frankenstein*, a camp figure who drinks whiskey from beakers and enjoys midnight snacks while grave robbing. More darkly, they may regard other people as merely test subjects. In *Dr. Cyclops*, the title scientist experiments on his hapless victims with a perverse boyish glee, while Dr. Mirakle in *Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1932) viciously tortures women on a strange quest to prove evolution. Professional glory (*Charly*, 1968) or simple revenge (*The Raven*, 1935) may be the scientist's motivation. Dr. Moreau (*Island of Lost Souls* and *Island of Doctor Moreau*) is both torturer and blasphemer. Mixing human and animal essences he produces an artificial creation with himself as God but ironically also Satan. (In the 1932 film, his creatures rightly fear visits to the “House of Pain.” In 1996, he inflicts pain with a gadget not unlike a TV remote control.) Borrowing from the real horrors of Nazi science, a fictionalized Josef Mengele in *The Boys from Brazil* (1978) continues his research (cloning Hitler) with no loss of ideological drive. Such disregard for social or moral norms dooms any hope that positive results will come from mad science, even if the original motive was noble.

To sharpen the critique, the fallen scientist may be confronted by a representative of institutionally respectable science, sometimes an old colleague or teacher (*Frankenstein*, *The Invisible Man*, *The Invisible Ray* [1935], *Dr. Cyclops*, *The Phantom Creeps* [1939]). Proper scientists also accept the limits set by conventional morality and religion. In *Journey to the Center of the Earth* (1959), Dr. Lindenbrook acknowledges divine authority, despite his quest for knowledge at any almost price. In *Fantastic Voyage* (1966), more crudely, the scientist who expresses wonder at God's creation proves loyal, while the atheist is revealed to be a traitor.

Films after the 1960s rarely present a mad scientist in the classic mold except as a comic figure; but elements of the mad scientist archetype persist. Dr. Forbin in *Colossus: The Forbin Project* (1969) is the closest to the classic image, even acknowledging his kinship to Frankenstein at one point. In *Demon Seed* (1977), Dr. Harris similarly creates a computer "monster" that then follows the standard path of destruction, in this case a sexual assault on Harris's estranged wife. Dr. Stone in *The Andromeda Strain* is secretive about the purpose of the research project he establishes (it turns out to be germ warfare) and is much more emotionally detached than his more conventional colleagues. Dr. Chandra in *2010* (1984) is more emotionally involved with computers than with his human colleagues. *Apollo 13* (1995) pokes gentle fun at the (heroic) flight controllers with their thick glasses and slide rules. However, the mad scientist motif continues to evolve. Starting in the 1970s, the individual mad scientist is often replaced by the corporation as the incubator of mad science (Schelde, 1993, 40–41), especially illicit substances or dangerous technology. The villainous corporation is indifferent to the human costs of its actions, focused on profits, highly secretive, and as always amoral. Just a few examples of this theme in recent decades are *Soylent Green* (1973), *Alien* (1979), *Outland* (1981), *Blade Runner* (1982), *Aliens* (1986), *Jurassic Park*, and *A.I.* (2001). *Twister* features corporate scientists as villains.

Given this generally negative image of science, it is not surprising that the relationship between science and politics is riddled with tension. Typically, the political response to scientific discoveries is highly defensive and focused on protecting the existing order. Echoing the social discomfort over evolution, genetic engineering, reproductive technology, and artificial intelligence, science is depicted as a source of danger. Once unleashed, it requires intervention by political and military authorities to contain it. Scientists themselves are too morally suspect or politically naive to be trusted. The legion of mad scientists who from the 1930s forward have sought world domination or to upend the laws of nature and society suggests the social unease about the potential of the geniuses to undermine "normal" society. When scientists play God or pursue dangerous questions, or seek knowledge "Man" was not meant to have, they must be contained and the results destroyed.

Another significant element of the filmic image of science is its simplification. Problems with scientific causes or solutions unfold very quickly in both screen time and chronology. In *The Day after Tomorrow* (2004), the global climate changes in a matter of hours, or at crucial junctures, only minutes. In *Deep Impact* (1998), the detection of a killer meteor is made almost instantaneously, with a few strokes of a keyboard. In innumerable science fiction films, mutations that produce monstrosities and even

new species emerge within hours or days (*Them!* [1954], *Tarantula* [1955], *The Beginning of the End* [1957], *The Amazing Colossal Man* [1957], *Omega Man* [1971], *Altered States*, and *I Am Legend* [2007] to name just a few).

When science is part of a public problem, the solutions are to be found among clashing “theories” (more properly hypotheses) in which scientist characters may be right or wrong but rarely armed with empirical evidence. In *Journey to the Bottom of the Sea* (1961), Admiral Nelson, convinced of his theory’s accuracy, ignores other scientists and the doubts of his own crew in a race to the North Pole where, put into practice, his theory saves the world. Scientific debates are driven by gut instinct, logical inferences, or emotional arguments. Effective public policy in such cases is the ability to select the “right” scientists and theories while rejecting the “wrong” ones.

The science depicted in films is also strangely unspecialized. Especially in science fiction and horror films to the mid-1900s, science is fairly generic and scientific expertise is not limited to any particular field. A Dr. Frankenstein is an expert in almost any conceivable scientific or medical field. When science is part of a film’s plot, scientific principles and methodology are always greatly simplified, often reduced to a singular concept (radiation in post-Hiroshima films) or simplified buzzwords (radium, mutation). Scientific information is presented as required by the plot, but often in the form of exposition to an “average person” character who stands in for the audience. The treatment of scientific complexity may become an ironic joke at the expense of the *scientist*: the average person can laugh off the scientist’s complex words as they hold the right to make the final moral judgment on the merits of that science. This is perhaps best depicted in *The Thing* (1951) where Dr. Carrington, cold and remote as his Arctic laboratory, is willing to risk everyone’s lives to contact an obviously hostile alien. The extraterrestrial threat is neutralized (by electricity in a reversal of the Frankenstein creation) by nonscientists (an Air Force crew), who are technically competent but clearly do not comprehend much of the science they encounter. A similar dynamic is seen in *The Right Stuff* (1983), where “All-American” astronauts prevail over the lab-coated (and sometimes foreign) doctors and engineers (“rocket scientists”). The medical personnel especially appear more like torturers than healers as they “test” (experiment on) the astronauts.

This ambivalence about science taps into social anxieties about the terrifying potential of science to create or destroy (Telotte, 1999, 136). This is particularly evident in the postwar fear of nuclear technology, especially weapons (Lipschutz, 2001). Nuclear science may generate hope for its peaceful uses (*This Island Earth*, 1955) but is primarily a source of danger if that power is misused, which filmmakers ensure happens. Even when not caused by design, atomic mutations are lurking around every corner (*Them!*, *Tarantula*, *The Beginning of the End*). Nuclear madness is best exemplified by *Dr. Strangelove* (1963). The wheelchair bound, German-accented Strangelove is a visual composite of Henry Kissinger, Herman Kahn, and Werner von Braun among others (Seed, 1999, 150). Strangelove has trouble controlling his artificial arm and keeps reverting to his Nazi past as Armageddon approaches.

Another modern anxiety is economic obsolescence or even the loss of free will due to automation. In films depicting artificial intelligence, such creations operate as a dark

mirror of human sins and weaknesses. Computers (along with robots and androids) are traditionally menacing figures, drawing on the iconography of Frankenstein. As computers became more common in the 1960s and 1970s, anxiety over their potential to displace human workers or humanity itself gave them an additional air of malice. It is not surprising that computers were often cinematic villains (*2001: A Space Odyssey* [1968], *Colossus: The Forbin Project*, *Demon Seed*, *Logan's Run* [1976]). These creations are perhaps too human for our own good as they have human aspirations: power, knowledge, and even progeny. Interestingly, as computers became ubiquitous and familiar, they have ceased to be as threatening, although often at the price of their personalities. They have been reduced to mere tools and reflect only the moral intent of their operators. In *Independence Day* (1996), a computer-generated virus wielded by an eccentric scientist saves the world. While Hal 9000 (introduced in *2001*) remains a character in *2010*, he is a more sympathetic figure in the later film. Not a monster run amok, the sequel reveals Hal to be the victim of excessive government secrecy that has made him schizophrenic.

Those that control science may also be suspect, especially when scientists and their allies in government keep secrets. Secrecy is usually justified in the name of security or to prevent public hysteria. In *When Worlds Collide* (1951), scientists devise the means to transport a handful of humanity to safety, but the terrified mob (an echo of the village mobs from *Frankenstein*) storms the rocket, risking the entire mission. In *Deep Impact*, with a comet days from striking the Earth, panicked crowds demand entry to the "Ark" survival bunker while the anonymous majority herd onto the highway for other sources of safety. The need to protect (or control) this panic-prone public is also evident in many films where scientific information or discoveries are kept secret (*2001*, *The Andromeda Strain*, *The China Syndrome* [1979], *Raiders of the Lost Ark* [1981], *2010*, *Stargate* [1994], *Contact* [1997], *Deep Impact*). The desire of military and political authorities to keep scientific information secret is almost a reflex. In films that postdate the Vietnam War and Watergate, government secrecy about science itself is the villain, as reflected in UFO conspiracy films (*The Arrival*, 1996, *The X-Files*, 1998).

While the depiction of science in film is diverse, the image of Frankenstein has been the most important. When pursued by scientists who are morally irresponsible and socially isolated, it is not surprising that science produces monsters and ultimately fails to uphold social norms. The scientist himself (rarely herself), may be an object of fun or fear but is usually a morally ambiguous figure. Government's interaction with science is also troubled and tends to necessitate the control of negative, socially disruptive science. Despite the innumerable positive accomplishments of science in the real world, on film it remains a highly problematic endeavor, tainted by hints of blasphemy, hubris, and recklessness.

See also: Politics and Film; Science Fiction Film, The

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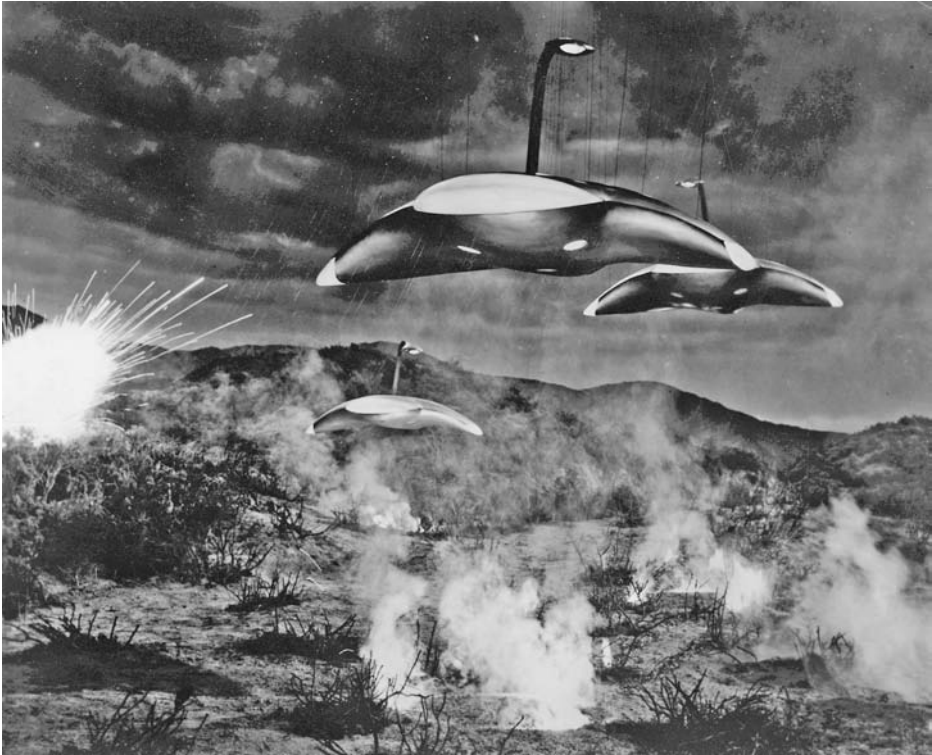
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—Karl Leib

SCIENCE FICTION FILM, THE. Science Fiction (SF) is a genre that explores themes of science and progress, space travel and adventure, technological and social advances, encounters with aliens and alien worlds, and the foundational elements of the human condition. As a genre, SF is fluid; films may be set in the past, the present, or the future, and in locales as diverse as the Earth, other planets, other galaxies, and even other dimensions. SF explores the potential of science to revolutionize the lives of humans, allowing them to be exposed to the wider universe, to make startling discoveries and develop amazing new technologies, and to display a disturbing and destructive sense of overweening arrogance.

Today, SF is a major industry, producing films, television and animated series, video games, novels, comic books, toys, and more. With its ideas and ideals permeating American culture, the influence of SF is hard to overestimate. As a genre with few limits on subject matter, iconography, period, or place, SF is easily used to express political views overtly, or covertly through analogy and symbolism. SF's influence, for instance, has been felt in America's changing attitudes toward women, the Cold War, the Vietnam War, the space race, and developments in science and technology. Indeed, SF has even influenced the way we think: the phrase "science fiction" is used to distinguish current science and technology from that which may or may not develop in the future. SF is also associated with real scientific progress. A minor example is the flip-top cell phone, a version of which was first seen on *Star Trek*; a major example is the creation of the U.S. National Aeronautics Space Agency (NASA)—SF contributed here by popularizing the idea of space travel, by helping to disclose the potential for new discoveries in outer space, and by helping to spread the belief in UFOs. We see references to SF in everyday life, from SF-inspired fashions in clothing and jewelry to homes built to look like spaceships.

With its emphasis on progress, SF has been particularly open to exploring the changing role of women, although as with pictures from other genres, SF films have tended to be overwhelmingly male oriented. Their heroes and antiheroes are most often masculine, and their points of reference have traditionally been geared toward examinations of the fears and desires of men. Yet SF has also provided women with



Alien spacecraft open fire in a battle scene from the 1953 film *War of the Worlds*, directed by Byron Haskin. (Getty Images)

roles that are clearly exceptional when compared with those offered to women who appear in other genre films. Significantly, in American-made SF films, we find female characters in positions of authority—astronauts, medical doctors, and scientists—even though real-life women have long been relegated to subordinate roles while trying to forge their careers; and although SF characters such as Wonder Woman and the 50-Foot Woman tended to draw on male fantasies about and fears of the too-powerful female, other roles have defined female paths to power—Sarah Conner (Linda Hamilton) in *Judgment Day*; Delenn (Mira Furlan) in *Babylon 5*; Captain Janeway (Kate Mulgrew) in *Star Trek Voyager*; Ellie Arroway (Jodie Foster) in *Contact*; and Trinity (Carrie-Anne Moss) in *The Matrix*.

The history of SF films spans the history of cinema. Some of the first films ever made were proto-science fiction offerings, including the silent pictures *A Trip to the Moon* (*La voyage dans le lune*, 1902) and *20,000 Leagues under the Sea* (1916). In the United States, SF's early popularity was due in large part to the fact that it attracted younger audiences with its cheap film serials based on comic book heroes like *Flash Gordon* (1936–1940) and *Buck Rogers* (1939). During the 1950s, often referred to as SF's first golden age, a large number of SF films were produced, most of them low budget and most, though not all, geared toward juvenile audiences. Films like *The*

Day the Earth Stood Still (1951), *Invaders from Mars* (1953), and *The Invisible Boy* (1957) featured young boys as main characters, while others like *Fire Maidens from Outer Space* (1956), *Attack of the 50 Foot Woman* (1958), and *The Blob* (1958) obviously appealed to teenage males.

The 1950s also saw the production of numerous classics in SF. These films, many of which were about aliens and nuclear monsters, expressed anxiety over nuclear radiation, the communist scare, and disasters in space. In both *War of the Worlds* (1953) and *Earth vs. the Flying Saucers* (1956), for example, alien ships attack earth but are ultimately destroyed. In another classic, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956), a small-town boy tells a doctor that his parents are not really his parents, and the rest of the film follows the doctor's discovery of look-alike aliens and his efforts to warn the rest of the world about these intruders. A similar story is told in *Invaders from Mars*. This film too begins with a boy; he sees a spaceship from his bedroom window at night, and the next day his parents start acting strangely. In *Them!* (1954), nuclear radiation causes ants to mutate into giants that threaten to overtake the earth. In *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, an alien ambassador visits Earth to warn its inhabitants that an interplanetary alliance exists and will not tolerate humans taking their wars into space. In *When Worlds Collide* (1951), disaster from space threatens in the form of a meteor; the film ends on a positive note, though, as a group of men, women, plants, and animals travel in a newly built space rocket and land on a shining new planet.

Although the 1960s and 1970s produced fewer SF films, this period saw the release of big-budget films in the genre and the development of major franchises. Realistic space photography and groundbreaking special effects were developed by Arthur C. Clarke and Stanley Kubrick in a film that explored the mysteries of space, time, and human evolution: *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), based on a story Clarke published in 1948. The following year, the first *Star Trek* television series aired (1969–72), followed by the first *Star Trek* movie in 1979. *Star Trek* attained worldwide popularity and generated countless official and unofficial media spin-offs, with a total of 11 feature films, 5 television series, several animated series, and uncounted novels and video games. Also extremely popular, the first *Star Wars* film was released in 1977, followed by *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980) and *Return of the Jedi* (1983). The trilogy was rereleased in a special edition (1997), and was later followed by three prequels (1999, 2002, and 2005).

Other themes developing around this time were the reverse of space adventure and alien invasion: inner space and visits from cute and sexy aliens. *Fantastic Voyage* (1966), *Altered States* (1980), and *Tron* (1982) exemplify the SF turn toward inner space. In *Fantastic Voyage*, a miniaturized ship and crew travel inside a man's body, which looks every bit like an alien planet. *Altered States* explores the human brain with the help of advanced machines, hallucinogens, and sensory deprivation. In *Tron*, a computer programmer is transferred inside a computer where he battles an evil program.

Friendly aliens became popular in 1970s and 1980s films. In *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977), the U.S. military communicates with alien spaceships via music, and one of the ships returns a variety of people who have mysteriously disappeared over the years. In *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial* (1982), a friendship develops between a boy and a cuddly alien who is temporarily stranded on earth. In *Starman* (1984), a

romantic relationship develops between a widow and a transforming alien who takes on the shape of her dead husband.

Beginning in the 1980s, dystopian films became extremely popular. With the help of big budgets and special effects, pictures such as *Blade Runner* (1982), *The Terminator* (1984), and *The Matrix* (1999) portrayed a number of possible dark futures. In *Blade Runner*, artificial life forms (artificial intelligence) are made so realistically that even they do not know they are not human. This film is an iconic representative of dystopian cinema, with its portrait of a constantly rainy, dismal, and broken-down 2020 Los Angeles. *Terminator* and *The Matrix* show the darkest of all possible futures when humans are all but wiped out by AI takeovers. Fear of computers is also the subject of *War Games* (1983), which demonstrates the folly of trusting computer programs—and programmers, it seems—with the keys to initiating nuclear war.

The social dystopia is also important in SF, beginning as early as *Metropolis* (1927). In this film, industrial capitalism divides the members of the working class, who live out their miserable lives deep beneath the earth, from the members of the upper class, who live out their lives in sun-drenched towers that soar above the earth. In *Fahrenheit 451* (1966), a social equality movement results in a thought-controlled society. In *Soylent Green* (1973), overcrowding and pollution result in a scarcity of food, and a government that secretly euthanizes humans to produce protein wafers that are the most sought-after form of food. In 1984, the first film based on George Orwell's dystopian novel *1984* was produced, making Big Brother—the idea that government could become an oppressive, omnipresent overseer that controls every aspect of human life and thought—a household phrase. Other examples of government as an oppressive presence in peoples' lives are *The Handmaid's Tale* (1990), in which fertile women are turned into breeders after a nuclear war renders most of humanity infertile, and *Gattaca* (1997), in which genetic selection leads to a rigid social structure based on a futuristic form of eugenics.

As the twenty-first century opened, SF cinema remained as popular as it had ever been, even though many of the current SF films were remakes. Indeed, between 1990 and 2009, numerous remakes, sequels, and prequels were produced, including *War of the Worlds*, *Star Trek*, *Terminator*, *Star Wars*, *Metropolis*, *The Matrix*, and *The Time Machine*.

Not surprisingly, in SF cinema, science is always present, whether foregrounded explicitly—as in films such as *This Island Earth* (1955), in which all of the main characters are scientists—or looming in the background—as in *Star Wars*, in which the things of science are used as dramatic props that drive the narrative forward. Significantly, in many SF films, science itself is the focus. This is the case, for instance, in *Contact* (1997), in which scientists discover a message from aliens that consists of blueprints for building a spaceship. After scientists from the United States and Japan work together to build it, Dr. Ellie Arroway (Jodie Foster), who originally discovered the alien message, travels on the ship to another planet. During the course of the trip, she experiences all the wonders of the galaxy, talks to an alien, and finally receives answers to some of her most troubling questions. Ellie is portrayed as having always been interested in the stars; science is who she is. Yet her trip is literally characterized as a religious experience: she is shown ecstatically hurtling through space as she gazes through the translucent walls of her otherworldly vessel; later, when she returns with

no evidence that she ever left—from the perspective of the others who witness the event, the material ship moves not an inch—her experience becomes a sort of Kierkegaardian leap into the absurd abyss of personal faith.

Science is also linked with religion in *When Worlds Collide*. Here, the filmic focus is on the survival of the human race. Biblical references spoken by a narrator intensify and give greater meaning to the filmic experience, as viewers come to understand that the imminent destruction of the earth will be initiated by an act of God, that the rocket ship is actually functioning as an Ark of salvation, and that a new planet represents the Promised Land. The message of this film seems to be that science is a gift from the divine: God gives humanity knowledge, and when it is used correctly, the human race survives.

SF cinema has also explored deeply existential questions concerning the meaning of the human experience. Interestingly, it is often the case in SF films that humanity can only be defined by contrasting it to what it is not: in relationship, then, to alien entities, whether organic or machine. Thus, in the *Star Trek* films, humans interact with the alien Mr. Spock, who tightly controls his emotions, and with the android Data, who, because he is a machine, has no emotions. Data desperately wants to be human, but this can never be. No matter how much he studies and mimics us, he will never be able really to laugh, to cry, to be happy or sad. Along with Spock and Data, then, we find ourselves stretched across a continuum: from human, to alien, to even more alien—to machine.

Filmic portrayals of the contrast between humans, who are all too often consumed by their own emotions, and either aliens who display no affect or androids who are affectless have been central to SF for a very long time. In the 1950s classics *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* and *I Married a Monster from Outer Space* (1958), for example, alien invaders lack emotions and morals—it was, in fact, their lack of affect that eventually gave them away. At least those invaders tried to appear human, whereas in other films, such as those in the *Terminator* series, the machines were too rigid, too evil, too powerful to be easily mistaken for human beings. Even more alien are the tentacled monsters of films like *Independence Day*, in which aliens without mouths communicate telepathically, exposing themselves as beings of pure evil and Otherness. Yet, despite the fact that they almost always lack the very traits that make us most human, science fiction's Others usually help us to understand ourselves. Perhaps because they are not human, because they are sometimes able to see things much more clearly than we can, they force us up against important questions: Where have we come in our great quest to solve the mysteries of science, technology, and even of the cosmos? And where do we go from here? Given our unbridled ambitions, what might we unleash on the universe?

See also: Matrix Series, The; Star Trek Series, The; Star Wars Series, The

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—Susan de Gaia

SCREEN ACTORS GUILD. In 1925, the Masquers Club was founded by a group of actors who wished to fight against what they saw as the abuses of the studio system. In 1933, members of the club united with other actors to form an organization aimed at protecting artists' rights, the Screen Actors Guild (SAG). SAG was formed to protect screen performers from studio exploitation at a time when the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) had been passed by President Roosevelt's administration, guaranteeing a minimum wage and a maximum number of hours employees could be asked to work. The NIRA also allowed for the right to form organizations and to bargain collectively through chosen individuals. It was into this atmosphere of unionized power that SAG was born.

To highlight that the members of the organization were artists, the word "guild" was adopted, rather than union, as this set members apart from laborers and labor unions. Not surprisingly, heads of studios, such as Irving Thalberg, fought against this new organization. In March 1933, three actors, Ralph Morgan, Alden Gay, and Kenneth Thomson, met to discuss their disgust with the studio system and their wariness that membership of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences was by invitation only. Three months later, Morgan, Gay, and Thomson joined with others who shared their concerns and formed SAG.

The guild's first officers and board of directors were formed from members including Boris Karloff, C. Aubrey Smith, and Leon Ames. Alan Mowbray financed the organization at this early stage, and Morgan was elected SAG's first president. Subsequent presidents included some of Hollywood's most identifiable names, including Robert Montgomery (twice), James Cagney, Howard Keel, Dana Andrews, and Charlton Heston. Ronald Reagan was also president twice. During the organization's early stages, the membership of SAG increased dramatically when future president Eddie Cantor insisted that the union should help all actors, not just those already established. In 1937, producers agreed to negotiate with SAG. This was after the National Labor Relations Act was passed; the act limited the extent to which employers could react to labor unions and strikes.

The studio system still existed, however, and tried to exert its power despite the formation of SAG. While the union had won better working conditions for actors, the studios could still dictate which roles they played. Olivia de Havilland, for example, rebelled against the studios and was suspended for six months. When Warners refused to release de Havilland from her seven-year contract, insisting that her suspension be added on to the seven years, de Havilland sued and won. This landmark victory became known as the De Havilland Decision. The studios' influence waned further when James Stewart negotiated for a percentage of the profits from *Winchester '73* and won.

There have been other clashes between SAG and powerful administrative figures in the film industry. In 1947, for instance, a group of actors suspected of communism was ordered to appear before the House Un-American Activities Committee, which was investigating the possible influence of communists within Hollywood labor unions. Ten of those summoned refused to appear before the committee and were sentenced to prison. This led to several SAG members, such as Humphrey Bogart, flying to Washington to show support for the 10. That same year, SAG voted to force its

members to pledge to be noncommunist. SAG has also called on its members to strike several times, which they have done.

SAG is linked to the Associated Actors and Artistes of America (AAAA), which is the primary performers' union in the United States. Through years of detailed negotiation, SAG has established strict regulations for all aspects governing members working on union projects, which include most film and television programs. At this point, union productions are only allowed to hire union performers.

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—Victoria Williams

SCREENPLAY AND THE SCREENWRITER, THE. Early, silent movies did not rely on screenplays or scripts. Rather, film treatments laid out narrative scenarios that described for the director the dramatic (or comedic) action of each scene. Title writers created intertitles—short written descriptions inserted between scenes. It was not until the sound era that the modern screenplay emerged. Many early films, both in the silent and sound eras, relied on previously published material for narratives. This was primarily because the screenplay as a genre and the screenwriter as an artist had not yet emerged. In addition, the literary source of many early films served to elevate the artistic value of the film.

The screenwriter is the author of the screenplay. Today the quality of the script is considered vital to the success of a film, and screenwriters are often recognized—and paid handsomely—for their work. This was not always the case, however. During Hollywood's golden age—roughly from the advent of the sound era at the end of the 1920s into the early 1960s—writers were under contract to the studios, and often as many as 10 writers contributed to a single script. The studio executives tapped into the writers' individual talents, with some creating dialogue, others generating plotlines, and still others working on character development. The script for *Casablanca* (1942), for example, which many film critics and historians consider to be the finest screenplay ever written for an American film, was penned by no fewer than four writers, all of whom worked independently on the project.

This piecemeal approach traces its roots to the silent movie era. Before the term “screenwriter” existed, there were gag writers, continuity writers, treatment writers, scenarists, adapters, and title writers. The treatment writer would sketch out the basic plot of the film; the scenarist would script the descriptions of the individual scenes (or several scenarists would be used to write different scenes for one picture); and, if the film was a comedy, the gag writer would be used to describe the sight gag performed by the actor. Once all of this was accomplished, the continuity writer would weave all of these



Director Charlie Kaufman attends the premiere of *Synecdoche, New York* on October 28, 2008, in London. (Dan Kitwood/Getty Images)

script elements together into final form and the title writer would write the title cards that appeared on the screen throughout the movie. These titles may have included words “spoken” by the characters or plot descriptions. Not surprisingly, the first Academy Awards had three writing categories: Title Writing, Adaptation, and Original Story.

With the advent of cinematic sound, playwrights began to be recruited to craft dialogue, and it is at this point that the modern notion of screenwriting was born. During the studio era, ideas for scripts almost always originated with the studio production heads, and were assigned to the contract writers for development. Writers often had access to large research departments and libraries, and worked regular hours on the studio lot. With the demise of the studio system, however, screenwriters began to work independently, at least initially, on scripts. They would now devise original scripts, or sometimes

adapt a novel, story, or play into a screenplay at the request of producers who owned the production rights to previously published material.

Screenplays usually begin as concepts, which are then developed into treatments, or what can be considered abstracts for the filmic story. If a screenwriter can sell the idea, then he or she will generally write the screenplay. The economics of the present system dictate this process. While experienced writers are often allowed to pitch their ideas to producers at the treatment stage, aspiring screenwriters are usually required to draft and attempt to sell a completed screenplay.

Today there are basically two main categories of screenplays: the original screenplay, which is written directly for the screen; and the adapted screenplay, which is based on some published material. Screenwriters tend to specialize in one type of screenplay or the other, as each medium requires unique scripting abilities.

The composition of a screenplay may begin with the creation of characters, with the story being driven by the actions of those characters; in some cases, however, the

screenwriter begins with a particular subject matter—a cultural issue or historical event, for instance—and then develops filmic characters that are defined in relationship to that subject matter. In fashioning the screenplay for *Chinatown* (1974), for example, Robert Towne wanted to create a hard-boiled detective story in the tradition of Raymond Chandler. In order to construct the foundational narrative elements for *Chinatown*, Towne turned to a real-life incident in which water from Central California was diverted to the San Fernando Valley in Los Angeles. While Towne used this incident as a cinematic point of departure, he went on to develop a powerful cast of characters, who were brought to life on-screen by Jack Nicholson, Faye Dunaway, and other talented actors.

A screenwriter's relationship to his or her work varies. In some cases, once a writer has completed a screenplay and it is accepted for production, the writer has nothing more to do with the project. In other cases, however, the writer maintains a presence throughout the entire production. Towne, who has long been friends with Jack Nicholson and Roman Polanski, came up with the idea for *Chinatown* (1974) while working on the set of *The Last Detail* (1973), and pitched it to Nicholson, who was starring in the latter film. Once *Chinatown* was picked up, Towne and Polanski worked together daily for six weeks developing a final draft of the screenplay—Towne was even included in the casting process. Interestingly, even though Polanski worked hand-in-hand with Towne to perfect the script, it is universally regarded as a Robert Towne screenplay.

Significantly, screenwriters such as Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams had established themselves as playwrights before they began working in films. The best of these writers, Miller and Williams included, were—and still are—highly valued in Hollywood, not only because they produced quality scripts, but also because they brought a certain legitimacy to the filmic projects on which they worked. Other screenwriters were novelists first. William Faulkner, for instance, spent many of his best years in Hollywood writing screenplays to supplement the monies he earned for his literary work. Similarly, Raymond Chandler, originally a journalist but famous for his hard-boiled detective fiction, found work writing and adapting screenplays. Working in the studio system proved challenging for some of these writers, who, because of their idiosyncratic behaviors, had difficulty adapting to the tight scheduling demands of the studio. While working on *The Blue Dahlia* (1946), as the story goes, Raymond Chandler was distressed to learn that the picture was going into production before he had penned a single word of the script. Although he was able to get most of the script written as shooting began, two weeks into the project he had yet to find an ending for the film and was suffering from writer's block. He told the film's producer John Houseman—who was also one of Chandler's very good friends—that although he was a recovering alcoholic and had been sober for some time, he could only finish the script if he relapsed completely. Houseman purportedly arranged for Paramount Studios to pay to have six secretaries placed at Chandler's house around the clock. A doctor was also hired to give Chandler vitamin shots, as he rarely ate when drinking. Limousines waited outside, ready to run pages at a moment's notice. In the end he produced one of his best original scripts, and the story of his self-sacrifice became Hollywood legend.

Although he was not a literary figure like Faulkner and Chandler, one of Hollywood's most successful screenwriters was Paddy Chayefsky, who many considered unique

because he saw film as a writer's medium. Like almost all screenwriters, early in his career even Chayefsky saw his work cut and revised without his approval, until it sometimes bore little resemblance to the original product. Chayefsky, however, was able to work with a small production company in the 1950s, ultimately gaining absolute control over his work and establishing himself as one of the most important screenwriters in the business. By the time he wrote *Network* (1976)—for which he earned one of his three Academy Awards—Chayefsky had gained such notoriety that his name appeared in the hallowed space over the credits.

While Chayefsky was one of the industry figures who gave screenwriting a serious stamp, it may be argued that Joe Eszterhas was the person who gave screenwriting its celebrity status. By the 1990s, Eszterhas was Hollywood's most notorious screenwriter, famous not so much for the quality of his scripts—although some were very good—but for their racy nature, his jet-set lifestyle, and for the astronomical salaries he commanded for his work—at his peak, he was earning as much as \$4 million per script. While films such as *Jagged Edge* (1985) and *Basic Instinct* (1992) are regarded as fun, edgy thrillers that titillated audiences with their scenes of sex and violence, two of his later films from this period, *Showgirls* (1995) and *An Alan Smithee Film: Burn Hollywood Burn* (1998), were considered among the worst films ever made, and even received “awards” for Worst Screenplay. Given Eszterhas's salary, some pointed directly at him as the cause for these failures. Soon after *An Alan Smithee Film* was released, he abandoned Hollywood for suburban Ohio, found religion, and denounced his previous lifestyle of booze, bullying, and womanizing. Indeed, after scripting so many films exploiting sex and violence, he is, somewhat ironically, penning the story of the Virgin of Guadalupe.

Although there have been many very good screenwriters, some of the most notable beyond those already discussed include Charles Brackett (*The Lost Weekend*, *Sunset Blvd.*), Steve Zaillian (*Schindler's List*, *Searching for Bobby Fischer*), David Mamet (*The Verdict*, *Wag the Dog*), William Goldman (*Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, *The Princess Bride*), Charlie Kaufman (*Being John Malkovich*, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*), and Nora Ephron (*When Harry Met Sally*, *Sleepless in Seattle*, *Julie & Julia*). Woody Allen and Billy Wilder—both highly regarded directors—top the list of writers who have been nominated for Oscars, with 14 and 12, respectively; while Billy Wilder, Charles Brackett, and Paddy Chayefsky have the most Oscar wins, with three each.

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—Dean R. Cooleedge

SILENT ERA, THE. The silent film era extends from the late nineteenth century, with the earliest work by the Lumière brothers in France and Thomas Edison in America, into the early 1930s, when silent film gave way to “talkies.” However, most scholars situate the silent era in America during the 1910s and 1920s, when it matured as a tightly organized industry privileging the multireel feature film after the waning of the nickelodeon, the move to Hollywood from earlier production headquarters in New York and New Jersey, and the decline in competition from European filmmakers caused by World War I. D. W. Griffith’s 12-reel feature *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) was a major commercial and cinematic success, pointing the way for the film industry as it headed into the 1920s.

While the term “silent” in silent cinema refers to the lack of synchronized sound, early cinema was far from silent in other respects. From the nickelodeon era into the 1920s, films were accompanied by live music, ranging from single pianos or reed organs to large orchestras, depending on the nature and location of the venue—which ranged from small storefront theaters to thousand-seat picture palaces. Some studio releases came with specifically composed musical scores, and almost all with cue sheets that suggested musical themes for specific scenes. Often, solo musicians more or less expert at reading the visual cues of the film improvised a score on the spot, and exhibitors also drew on large published collections of sheet music appropriate for stock scene types. Outside of musical accompaniment, theaters in the silent period could employ “descriptive talkers” or “lecturers” who narrated the film, sometimes from printed matter of varying degrees of specificity. Other lecturers improvised dialogue not included, for instance, on intertitles. In urban immigrant communities, this feature was represented as a means of self-improvement, and it continued to be employed whenever visual narrative clarity was compromised. As the feature film became the central industry product, the use of lecturers declined and the use of title cards for dialog became more realistic, gradually supplanting exposition cards. In 1925, Warner Bros. created the Vitaphone process—a sound-on-disc system whose development signaled the beginning of the end for silent film—ultimately releasing the first “talking picture,” *The Jazz Singer*, in 1927. Silent films, however, would continue to be made into the 1930s, with Charlie Chaplin’s *Modern Times* (1936) often described as the last silent film.

As a medium derived from still photography, vaudeville, and theater, silent film adapted many of their presentational methods; as the period progressed, however, the industry worked diligently to become more respectable, seeking to dissociate its product from that peddled by vaudeville houses and nickelodeons. While older venues and distribution methods persisted, grand picture palaces of the silent era dramatized the goals of the uplift movement—to create a safe, clean, family-friendly environment

for an orderly, middle-class audience in an economical fashion with vast seating capacities, elegant lobbies, and impressive orchestras. Despite the rise of the picture palace, though, smaller theaters remained more prevalent, with most having a seating capacity of fewer than 500—the Roxy Theater in New York, which boasted 6,214 seats, was opulent indeed, but it represented an extreme case. At the dawn of the 1920s, there were approximately 15,000 theaters in the United States, charging between 10 and 25 cents admission; of that number, more were in rural settings than in urban. Theaters exhibited various forms of entertainment in balanced programs, which grew in length over the period. A typical mid-1920s bill might include combinations of a musical overture, a news weekly, a lantern slide show, a live revue, a brief comedy or novelty film, and a feature film. Exhibitors sought to begin and end the programs at specified times, which sometimes meant speeding up projection, dropping items from the bill, or even cutting reels from the feature. As the number of larger theaters increased, there was less need for rapid audience turnover, and the multireel feature film evolved into the central entertainment attraction.

The evolution of the film industry's structure during the silent era was complex, and it was marked by new refinements in cinematic production, distribution, and exhibition that brought about the feature film. The development of the industry during this period was powerfully influenced by the emergence of the Motion Picture Patents Company, or MPPC (1908–1918), a licensing and trade association set up among established production companies to discourage competition. Throughout the period, the film industry worked toward standardization; contracts, patents, and licenses bound the industry into a tightly knit network. Studios affiliated with the MPPC controlled the distribution of their films—generally short one- to three-reel offerings—through the General Film Company. Controlling distribution enabled established East Coast companies to achieve a monopoly. These early efforts to control the film industry also included the development of the film exchange, a commercial arrangement between patent companies and exhibitors in which exhibitors rented their films—which changed almost daily—at set prices. In the early silent period, this exchange system was not calibrated for multireel features; exhibitors, exchanges, and production houses were reluctant to push multireel films, both because of audience expectations and because of the costs associated with screening them. Within the existing system, multireel films were released one reel at a time, ensuring quick audience turnover but retarding the development of complex narratives. Multireel features would typically be shown as special attractions or outside of the established distribution and exhibition system, and states' rights distribution practices evolved to allow local exchanges to contract with major distributors for territorial exhibition rights. Longer films were exhibited in this fashion, because they could travel throughout a particular region as a special attraction until the audience pool was exhausted. Thus, early multireel films tended to emerge from independent production houses or European film studios, which didn't experience the same limitations as mainstream American outfits. While distributors had separate arms specializing in features, as more large first-run theaters were constructed and demand increased, longer films became the order of the day. The devastation caused by the World War I had all but decimated the mainstream

European industry, and American companies, often building on already existing import agreements, began to compete vigorously for prestige pictures.

Independent American houses and European companies realized that to compete they must be able to distribute their products as well, and they set up their own corporations; ultimately, a small number of these corporations would gain tight control over the industry. Carl Laemmle's move from the East Coast to the West in 1915, where he set up Universal City, allowed his company to escape the patent and licensing wars in some measure, and production houses began cropping up in what was to become Hollywood. Laemmle launched several important silent stars, though for some time he resisted the feature film movement. Despite the success of some early Universal features like *Traffic in Souls* (1913), it was only in the 1920s that Laemmle sought to elevate the company's profile. The assembly-line methods of Universal City meant harsh working conditions, and many talented actors were easily lured away. Nonetheless, the star system was emerging, and the prestige film, the star's vehicle, was on the rise. In 1914, Adolph Zukor released New York-based Famous Players films through a newly created corporation, Paramount, which soon merged with the Lasky Company to become Famous Players-Lasky. Paramount Pictures quickly dominated the industry, as the influence of the MPPC declined due to Zukor's cunning business practices, the collapse of Triangle Film, a high concentration of star power, and the institution of block-booking practices. Exhibitors threatened by Paramount banded together to form the powerful First National, which used states' rights practices to distribute exclusively to the nearly 6,000 theaters they owned, and soon moved into production as well, acquiring a significant amount of talent. The battle between Paramount and First National for industry control and the distribution of prestige feature films had far-reaching effects. Amidst these power plays, and concerned with salary caps, the restriction of creative freedom, and a rumored merger between Paramount and First National, actors and directors entered the fray to form United Artists in 1919; however, without access to theaters, and burdened by hefty actors' contracts, it foundered—despite Joseph Schenck's inspired reorganization of the company in 1924. One important cause of the dramatic changes to the industry during the silent era was the method by which filmmaking was financed; by selling their stock on the public market, production and distribution companies not only acquired the influx of capital needed to compete but also made the industry more businesslike. In conjunction with factory production methods, which ensured consistent quality and regular release schedules, these methods of financing transformed cinema into one of the nation's leading industries. Cinema, trending toward the feature film, was becoming both art and product.

With standardization in production came a decrease in radical technological and artistic innovation but an elevation in production values, set quality, costumes, acting, and lighting. Very early silent cinema tended to minimize the camera's presence, composing short films of single, static shots or simple linear cuts, typically showing actors full-frame as on a stage. With the multireel feature, scene dissection became much more common, and a grammar of film emerged. D. W. Griffith pioneered crosscutting and editorial techniques designed to control pacing, and Mack Sennett used quick cuts to develop a distinguishing comedic style. As the variety show waned, spectacle was

incorporated into the feature film, in part under the pressure of foreign imports like *Queen Elizabeth* (French, 1912) and *Cabiria* (Italian, 1914). The extreme long shot and the wide pan could capture the spectacular expanses of the American landscape, and vast, detailed indoor sets could recreate images of elsewhere. With the rise of multireel feature films came a corresponding need for continuity, clarity, and character development; filmmakers introduced a more restrained acting style that emphasized facial expression over broad pantomime. The close-up became an important—though sometimes derided—stylistic device in the silent era, creating a new intimacy between audience and actor that opened the way for the star system. With the emergence of the star system, fan magazines like *Motion Picture Story* magazine (1911) and *Photoplay* (1911) galvanized a mass audience of consumers, and some of the most enduring actors captured the public imagination—Lillian Gish, Norma Talmadge, Harold Lloyd, Charlie Chaplin, Rudolph Valentino, Mary Pickford, Theda Bara, Douglas Fairbanks. In the 1920s, few dramatic American innovations in cinematography occurred, but abroad, flourishing avant-garde movements produced a variety of experimental cinema in the wake of war; surrealism, expressionism, and impressionism offered alternatives to mainstream narrative film, and Soviet filmmakers like Sergei Eisenstein developed rich montage techniques.

The significance of the silent era in film history cannot be overstated. During the first decades of the twentieth century, a truly commercial popular art emerged bound closely to the image of a modern America. With the development of synchronized sound, the era drew to a close, but the modes of production, distribution, exhibition, and consumption inaugurated during the silent film era persisted, creating the film industry as we know it today.

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—Tonya Howe

SLASHER FILMS. Although horror films have long been popular Hollywood fare, the social, political, and industrial changes that arose after World War II led to the development of new types of horror pictures that reflected the postwar culture. It may be argued that Universal Studios' 1930s and early 1940s creature features—including *Frankenstein*, *Dracula*, *The Wolfman*, and *The Mummy*—provided the archetype for mainstream horror films. Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960), though, with its cross-dressing, gender-confused killer and its shower stabbing scene, is frequently cited

as the progenitor of the slasher film. Hitchcock took Robert Bloch's novel of the same name, in which he had fictionalized the bizarre life of necrophiliac serial killer Ed Gein, as the basis for his hit movie. Essentially, *Psycho* broke new ground with its use of psychological rather than supernatural horror. Released in the same year, British director Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom*, in which a glamour photographer stabs women to death with his camera tripod's spiked legs, is also cited by horror critics as an important influence.

Emphasizing psychological rather than physical horror, *Psycho* and *Peeping Tom* presented viewers with predators who utilized a single weapon—a long-bladed knife in the first and the tripod in the second—to achieve their deadly work. Slasher predators, however, wielded an arsenal of cutlery that they used to kill their various victims in an array of gruesome ways. Inspired by *Psycho*, Tobe Hooper recycled the Ed Gein character and made *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* in 1974. *Massacre* concerned a family of cannibals that preyed on teenage transients. Hooper's seminal film bridged the gap between *Psycho* and what became traditional slashers. Essentially, Hooper invented the formula, with a psychopath who butchered a number of teens one by one until the last one (usually) kills him. Somewhat ironically, the success of slasher movies gave rise to two *Psycho* sequels: *Psycho II* and *Psycho III*.

The rise of the youth market, the elimination of the Production Code, the box-office triumphs of *Psycho*, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and, later, *Black Christmas* (1974), paved the way in 1978 for director John Carpenter's *Halloween*. This first official slasher movie, about an insane killer, Michael Myers, who escapes from a mental asylum and tries to kill his sister, made a fortune. *Halloween* inspired Sean S. Cunningham to make *Friday the 13th* in 1980. The success of that film and its many sequels opened the door for scores of derivative slashers.

Halloween's influence on *Friday the 13th* is unmistakable; indeed, scenarist Victor Miller acknowledged his debt to Carpenter's movie. *Halloween* perfected the slasher movie formula: a voyeuristic psychotic killer with gender identity problems dons a mask; he slaughters a group of teenagers without a qualm when they have sexual intercourse; revenge motivates the villain's homicidal behavior; a tomboyish girl prevails over the impotent psychotic killer; and no matter how many times the killer is stabbed and/or shot, he manages to survive. The so-called golden age of slasher movies ran from 1978 to 1986—although Wes Craven's *Scream* trilogy revived the genre in 1996, and the four *Scary Movie* pictures (2000–2006) delighted viewers by making fun of slasher flicks.

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—Van Roberts

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND FILM. Lorenz von Stein, a German sociologist, coined the term “social movement” in his 1850 *History of the French Social Movement from 1789 to the Present*. According to Charles Tilly (2004), who situates the origins of social movements in England and North America in the late eighteenth century, there are three major elements of social movements: campaigns, repertoire, and WUNC—participants’ public displays of worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment. Adding to this, Sidney Tarrow (1994) claims a distinction between social movements and political parties or special interest groups. Social movements, which some theorists argue are a result of urbanization and mass education, emerge as grassroots activities in response to particular social, political, or economic conditions that a group of people determines needs to be changed. Additionally, a social movement requires group action, which can be encouraged or reinforced through literature and film. Following this line of thought, the first social movements in America can be viewed as a result of British taxation (the Revolutionary War), westward expansion (concern for the American Indian and the environment), and inequality based on race, class, and gender (abolition, labor, and women’s rights).

One of the earliest social movements to take shape in America, the women’s rights movement is best summarized by Abigail Adams’s admonition to her husband in a letter dated March 31, 1776: “Remember all Men would be tyrants if they could. . . . If perticular care and attention is not paid to the Laidies we are determined to foment a Rebellion.” And “foment a Rebellion” they did. Through the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848 and suffrage marches in the early twentieth century, the movement continued



Actress Hilary Swank in a scene from the 2004 film *Iron Jawed Angels*, directed by Katja von Garnier. (Photofest)

to gain followers and strength. *Iron Jawed Angels* (2004) tells the story of young suffragists Alice Paul and Lucy Burns who, in the 1920s, broke away from the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) run by Carrie Chapman Catt to create a more radical wing of the movement; their formation of the National Women's Party (NWP) and continued nonviolent protest eventually led to the ratification of the 19th amendment in 1920. Although *Iron Jawed Angels* provides contemporary audiences with a historical view of the movement, *Politics* (1931) looks forward to a time when women not only vote but vie for public office. In *Politics*, Hattie Burns goes up against a group of crooked politicians and becomes the women's choice for mayor. In a women-against-men comedic performance, Hattie encourages the townswomen to strike, forcing the men to do the housework and to live without the women's services. The competition heats up after one of the men tells his wife, "You should stay in the kitchen where you belong." Pulling out all the stops, the women succeed in getting Hattie elected. Revealing the progress women have made on the political front, women have been cast in the role of president at least a dozen times from *Project Moonbase* (1953) to *24* (2008).

Politics is not the only area of society in which women sought to be treated as equals; the workplace has also been a battleground for women's rights, particularly during World War II when men went off to war and women went out to work. Depicting the origins of the cultural icon that would be used to proclaim women's equality, *Rosie the Riveter* (1944) is a comedy of errors in which Rosalind "Rosie" Warren and her friend Vera Watson take positions in a wartime airplane factory in California, encounter trouble, and finally find romance. As evidence of the icon's importance, one source credits the Rosie the Riveter movement with increasing the labor force in America by 57 percent between 1940 and 1944 (Porter, 2004). Before *Rosie*, however, Hollywood had already created a film featuring a woman who owns and operates a large automobile factory. In *Female* (1933), another comedy in which errors abound, a powerful female tycoon, Alison Drake, gets what she wants until one of her employees, a gifted engineer, fails to fall under her spell. The conflict between Alison's position as CEO and her feelings for Jim Thorne, the engineer, results in her having to decide between work and marriage.

On a more serious note, *Norma Rae* (1979) and *North Country* (2005) explore the continued oppression and exploitation of women in the workplace 50 years after the Rosies entered wartime factories. Hailed for its "realistic union-organizing campaign and the fierce corporate response at the fictional O. P. Henley textile mill," *Norma Rae* is one of the few Hollywood movies to explore the ideas of unionization or fair employment (Nathan and Mort, 2007). Unlike Alison in *Female*, the female lead in *Norma Rae* does not jump into bed with the male lead. Instead, Norma Rae Webster is already married (and a mother), and Reuben Warshowsky is a union organizer who becomes her friend, another situation rare in Hollywood movies (Nathan and Mort, 2007). With increasing courage and determination, Norma Rae is successful in organizing the millworkers, in the process discovering hidden inner strength. *North Country* takes labor issues into the twenty-first century with its interpretation of the first class-action sexual-harassment lawsuit filed in the United States. In this film, Josey

Aimes, a single mother who returns to her hometown looking for a way to support herself and her two children, quickly learns that working alongside men in a male-dominated profession offers a woman more than a living wage. After enduring sexist jokes and lewd behavior from her male co-workers, Josey sues her employer for failing to provide a safe workplace. Like Norma Rae, Josie finds an inner strength that carries her through legal, familial, and cultural battles.

Discrimination and unfair treatment in the workplace are not based solely on gender, and labor problems involving race can be seen in films such as *Matewan* (1987) and *Bread and Roses* (2000). Continuing the theme of unionization, *Matewan* portrays the conflict that arises in 1920 when white mine workers, struggling to unionize, go on strike and black and Italian miners are brought in as strikebreakers. Union organizer Joe Kenehan intervenes, convinces the black and Italian miners that unity is the answer, and brings the three groups together. After numerous violent confrontations between labor and management, many centered around Kenehan, the miners successfully return to work. In its depiction of the labor struggle, *Bread and Roses* brings to light the oppressive treatment of another group: Mexicans. This film reveals the labor inequities experienced by the legal and illegal immigrants who clean offices in late twentieth-century Los Angeles. Based on the Justice for Janitors campaign, *Bread and Roses* covers the janitorial workers' efforts to unionize, under the threat of deportation for some and the loss of employment for others.

The civil rights movement (1955–1968), also the result of racial disparity in American society, began as an attempt to abolish racial discrimination and restore black suffrage in the South; the movement emphasized freedom, respect, dignity, and social and economic equality. Racial segregation, disenfranchisement, exploitation, and violence gave the movement direction. Founded in 1909 to end racial discrimination through legal means, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's (NAACP) most successful action was *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), which overturned the separate-but-equal doctrine established with *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) and instituted the long struggle for integration and equal educational opportunities in public schools. Acts of civil disobedience meant to promote equal rights led to altercations between protestors and authority figures. *The Long Walk Home* (1990) and *Mississippi Burning* (1988) represent two different but equally important landmarks in the civil rights movement: the Selma, Alabama, bus boycott (1955) and the murder of three civil rights activists in Neshoba County, Mississippi (1964). *The Long Walk Home* follows the relationship that develops between two women—Odessa Cotter, a black maid, and Miriam Thompson, her white employer—whose lives are affected and eventually changed by the bus boycott, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s first attempt to desegregate the Birmingham transportation system. *Mississippi Burning*, moving from the personal to the political, engages viewers in the discrepancies of the American justice system when the victims of violence are unpopular with law enforcement. Taking opposite approaches to representing events that helped to shape the civil rights movement, both movies present fictionalized versions of history that remind contemporary audiences of the struggle for equality forged in America's recent past.

Yet another racially motivated effort, the American Indian movement (AIM), formally organized in 1968, grew out of an effort to unite the indigenous peoples of the Americas through spirituality and common need (Wittstock and Selinas, 2008). Some of the movement's first actions were to counteract police violence against Native Americans, reclaim land for Indian use, and guarantee treaty fulfillment with representative government bodies. Recognizing that passive resistance had not been successful in protecting Indian rights, the movement's leaders determined that a more aggressive approach to the problems of native peoples needed to be implemented. Efforts to bring about an awareness of the plight of Native Americans resulted in numerous activities, such as the seizure of the Mayflower replica on Thanksgiving Day (1970), the occupations of Mount Rushmore (1971) and Wounded Knee (1973), the takeover of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (1972), and the organization of The Longest Walk (1978). Inspiring films such as *Billy Jack* (1971) and *Dances with Wolves* (1990) document the effects of government oppression on Native Americans and reflect the move from passive resistance to active confrontation in the Indians' attempts to better their situation. Undoing many of the stereotypes created by the B-westerns of the mid-twentieth century, *Dances with Wolves* traces the trust and friendship that develop between a white Union Army officer, John J. Dunbar, and the Sioux who make him an honorary member of their tribe. Taking the Indians' side in the war over western expansion, Dunbar warns the Indians that more white men will come to take their land. Rather than make a stand against white encroachment, the Sioux move to their winter camp, but this does not protect them from government aggression. Focusing on the plight of Native Americans during the civil rights era, *Billy Jack* moves viewers into the future, a hundred years later, after the white government has forced Indians onto reservations. Billy Jack's role in the film is to protect the Freedom School, which has been founded on reservation land to support creative activity and teach nonviolent resolution and passive resistance. Violence erupts when a group of racist white youths attacks a group of Indian students in the town ice-cream shop. Although the school's founder, Jean Roberts, attempts to diffuse the situation through nonviolent means, Billy Jack—a half-breed, Green Beret, Vietnam vet—steps in to avenge Jean, the students, and the school after Jean's methods fail. Billy Jack's violent response leads to his eventual arrest, and the final shootout draws widespread media attention, seemingly making Billy's aggression more successful than Jean's passivity.

A film about the rights of Native Americans, *Billy Jack* is also a film about the wrongs of using violent methods to resolve human conflict. Thus, while not strictly an antiwar film, it produced one of the most recognized antiwar songs of the twentieth century, "One Tin Soldier," and encompassed the beliefs of the antiwar movement: the costs of the conflict are not worth the gains, the horrors of war are an abuse against humanity, and war benefits only particular interests. Billy Jack is a decorated Vietnam veteran, but his disillusionment with war causes him to abandon white society to live on reservation land. Taking an antiwar stance, he tries to adopt a philosophy of peaceful conflict resolution, but his Green Beret training has made him cynical about the honesty of the U.S. government and wary of the powerlessness experienced by those who embrace such a worldview. In the end, his struggle to define his position results

in a display of the conflict many Americans felt during the 1970s. An earlier representation of the antiwar movement, *The Great Dictator* (1940) is the first Hollywood film released before the United States entered World War II to denounce Hitler. In its stand against fascism, Chaplin's first "talkie" and most commercially successful film puts forth the goal of the antiwar movement in his now famous "Look up, Hannah" speech: "I don't want to rule or conquer anyone. I should like to help everyone if possible, Jew, gentile, black man, white. We all want to help one another, human beings are like that."

In 1975, the feminist movement was working toward the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), the civil rights movement was forcing the integration of public schools, and the American Indian movement (AIM) was continuing efforts to pass the Indian Self-Determination Act, which would ensure tribal self-governance (Man, 2007); the Environmental Movement, however, was just taking root in America. With the release of *Soylent Green* in 1973, Americans were asked to recognize the consequences of placing too heavy a burden on the Earth's resources. As overpopulation leads to widespread unemployment, homelessness, and poverty, and real food is unavailable or nonexistent, people subsist in a surreal world on "soylent wafers" made of chemically engineered ingredients. Through the storyline, viewers come to realize that the answer to the world's population problem (soylent green) is even more horrific than the problem itself. Ten years later, *Silkwood* (1983) moves from declaring the dangers of overpopulation to denouncing the effects of nuclear waste. One of the first movies of its type, *Silkwood* explores the personal and environmental implications of the harmful production and illegal disposal practices employed in a plutonium manufacturing plant. *A Civil Action* (1998) continues the story of environmental pollution by manufacturing plants, disclosing the harmful effects of water contamination by a leather manufacturing company in a small Massachusetts town. All three films are a call for environmental awareness and action.

Coming out in the 1990s, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered (LGBT) movement is bringing new interpretations of familiar themes (gender, labor, etc.) and characters to moviegoers. A relatively new entry on the list of American social movements, its origins have been traced by some to the sexual revolution of the 1960s; movies depicting nonheterosexuals have been around much longer. For example, *Queen Christina* (1931), obviously pre-Code Hollywood, deals beautifully with the Swedish monarch's bisexuality. What some have reported as a glossing over of this aspect of Christina's life, a simple kiss on another woman's mouth, others have read as affirmation of the queen's chosen lifestyle and one of the most incredible scenes in movie history. Later, dressed as a man, Christina meets and falls in love with a Spanish nobleman. The complexity of Christina's life is carefully and respectfully presented; there is no gratuitous lesbian sex for the masses here. In 2000, *If These Walls Could Talk* and *Common Ground*, covered decades of change in the American LGBT experience. Centered on the events that supposedly occur in one house over four decades, *If These Walls Could Talk* begins in the 1960s, when the surviving partner in a long-term lesbian relationship must face the legal implications of her unrecognized status; moves to the 1970s, where a student must face her friends' criticism because she falls for someone "butch"; and ends at the turn of the century, when an out lesbian couple

decides to have a child and begins the search for a sperm donor. *Common Ground*, which takes place in the small, fictionalized town of Homer, Connecticut, rather than a house, also crosses decades and generations. The first story takes place in the 1950s and involves a woman who is discharged from the military because of her sexuality; returning to Homer, she discovers her Section 8 discharge also prevents her from teaching. Flashing forward, viewers find themselves in the 1970s, toward the end of the Vietnam War, and drawn into a gay French teacher's struggle to keep his homosexuality a secret while mentoring a student who is questioning his own sexuality. The final story, which takes place at the turn of the century, details the conflict faced by a gay man who is contemplating a commitment ceremony. Even though the unity of the diverse entities involved in the LGBT movement is still a work in progress, film explorations of the unique issues facing the nonheterosexual population continue to emerge on the large and small screens, with notable recent examples being the 2008 release of *Prayers for Bobby* and *Milk*.

See also: African Americans in Film; Native Americans in Film; Religion and Nationalism in Film; Women in Film

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—Robin L. Cadwallader

SOUND. Films make use of three kinds of sound: music, dialogue and sound effects. Sound in film is either diegetic, issuing from the world of the film, or nondiegetic, originating from outside of the film. The most common type of nondiegetic sound is the music on a film's soundtrack. The characteristics of sound include rhythm, pitch, loudness, fidelity, and quality.

Debates about the first sound film abound in film history. The first sound film projected for an audience was Alan Crosland's *Don Juan* (1926), which featured recorded orchestra music but no dialogue. *The Jazz Singer* (1927) was the first film to use synchronized sound to tell a story, but it featured only a few short sound sequences.

The first American all-talking film was the 1928 picture *The Lights of New York*, which used full sound and image synchronization.

In its early stages of development, sound technology existed in two forms: sound-on-film and sound-on-disc. The sound-on-film system, or Phonofilm, converted sound into light waves that were printed along the edge of the frame. Phonofilm was developed by Lee De Forest in 1923. The sound-on-disc system used a phonograph to play a record of the sound as the film was being screened. Western Electric (a subsidiary of AT&T) marketed a sound-on-disc system called Vitaphone in 1925, but its major disadvantage was the difficulty of synchronizing the sound and the image. Warner Bros. bought Vitaphone and used it to make *Don Juan* and *The Jazz Singer*.

In 1928, "The Big Five," the most prestigious and powerful of the Hollywood film studios, pledged to adopt the sound-on-film system because its synchronization was more reliable. Hollywood's transition to sound films, however, was fraught with both economic and aesthetic problems. For example, it was expensive to outfit the studios and theaters with the new equipment. Moreover, directors had trouble blocking scenes, as early microphones were unidirectional and tended to pick up extraneous noise on the set. The sound of the camera was particularly problematic, so glass boxes were built to house the cameras, but these tended to restrict the camera's movement. In addition, actors, some of them very successful silent film performers, had difficulty making the transition to sound, and production costs escalated because screenwriters were now needed to write scripts. By 1932, though, the transition to sound was virtually complete. Charlie Chaplin was one of the most famous holdouts, reluctantly adding a few lines of dialogue to his 1936 film *Modern Times* before making a complete transition to the new technology in *The Great Dictator* (1940).

Even during the silent film era, moving pictures were never completely silent; although dialogue was communicated to audiences by way of written intertitle cards in most silent pictures, most of them were accompanied by live music and sound effects. Filmmakers understood early on, it seems, that music is crucial for establishing mood and providing leitmotifs for characters and events. With this in mind, studios began to hire composers to score their films, a practice that is still very much a part of the filmmaking process today.

The rising popularity of folk and rock music during the 1950s and 1960s, and the realization that many of the young people who listened to it also enjoyed watching movies gave rise to a new connection between film and music. A symbiotic relationship between popular music and film was powerfully expressed, for example, in *The Graduate* (Mike Nichols, 1967), which used music by the folk-rock duo Simon and Garfunkel to enhance the narrative images. Realizing there was a great deal of money to be made from cross-marketing films with popular music, studios began to produce soundtracks that ultimately sold millions of copies. A perfect example of this has been the success enjoyed by *The Bodyguard* soundtrack. Capitalizing on the popularity of Whitney Houston, Kasdan Pictures (teaming with Warner Bros. and TIG Productions) cast the pop diva opposite Kevin Costner in the film; enthusiastic fans showed up to hear Houston sing on-screen and then went out and purchased enough copies of the film's soundtrack to make it the biggest seller in history.

The production of sound for a film consists of four stages: design, recording, editing, and mixing. The sound designer comes up with a comprehensive plan for all elements of the film's soundtrack and how they will work together. Walter Murch, known for his Academy Award-winning work with director Francis Ford Coppola on *The Conversation* (1979) and *Apocalypse Now* (1979), came up with the phrase "sound design" to describe what he does. The introduction of the digital format for recording has allowed designers greater flexibility and creativity. In the contemporary recording process, technologies such as digital audiotape, compact discs, and computer hard drives are used to capture sounds. Direct sound is captured on the set by microphones placed on the actors, elsewhere on the set, or suspended overhead on a boom pole. The multitrack sound recording process (introduced with Robert Altman's *Nashville* in 1975; sound editor, William A. Sawyer) allows for the recording of up to 24 separate tracks of sound. Sound can also be recorded during postproduction in a studio and then mixed with the direct (or natural) sound. In the Automated Dialogue Replacement (ADR) process, a film's dialogue is performed by actors in a sound studio after the movie is shot. ADR ensures that the dialogue is clear and audible despite any distracting noises heard on the set during filming.

During the editing stage, the sound editor works with the director, music composer, and picture editor to pair the sound with the images. Sound effects are gathered and added, either through a digital program or using the Foley system. In this process, invented in the 1930s by Jack Foley, a sound technician for Universal, artists create sound effects in a specially equipped studio using a variety of objects. Sound mixing takes each individual track of sound and combines these into a fully developed sound design that complements the images. Most American films follow a sound hierarchy in which dialogue takes precedence, followed by music and sound effects.

Contemporary film sound has been improved by digital technologies in the production and postproduction processes and by the advent of the Dolby system in theaters. Dolby Stereo debuted in 1976 with four channels of surround sound, was improved to six channels in 1992, and seven in 1999. This extra channel is positioned behind the viewer to enhance the sense of surround sound; it is often used to create flyover effects in action films. American theaters use several different formats of digital sound: Dolby Digital, Digital Theater Systems (DTS) and Sony Dynamic Digital Sound (SDDS).

See also: Color; Music in Film; Musical, The; Silent Era, The

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—Jennifer L. Gauthier

SPORTS FILM, THE. In twentieth-century American cinema, the category of the sports film generally refers to movies that feature a sporting event as the primary setting, a real or fictional athlete as a central character, or a sporting-related theme as the context for the broader plot. Sports films vary in their use of humor, drama, biography, commentary, and action as devices for portraying real, metaphorical, or fantastic stories. While traditional American sports such as football, basketball, and boxing have frequently been used as plot backdrops for these pictures, baseball figured prominently in many of the most important sports films made during the twentieth century. Although not recognized by the American Film Institute as a film genre, this august body has nevertheless honored sports movies such as *The Hustler* (1961), *Raging Bull* (1980), and *Rocky* (1976) as some of the most significant films of the twentieth century.

There are several important subgenres of sports films. Where many of these movies have focused on dramatic re-enactments of athletic achievement or heroism, some have used sports as the context for more comprehensive and dramatic human interest stories. Examples of these latter pictures include: *Requiem for a Heavyweight* (1962), *Bull Durham* (1988), *Jerry Maguire* (1996), and *The Rookie* (2002). In these films, the relationships defined between and among their characters are the vehicles through which themes such as love and romance, redemption, or unlikely achievement are explored. Critically acclaimed films such as *The Hustler* and *Raging Bull* feature similarly composed central characters, wherein the plot and central conflict are essentially a function of the struggle or personal obsession of the protagonist.

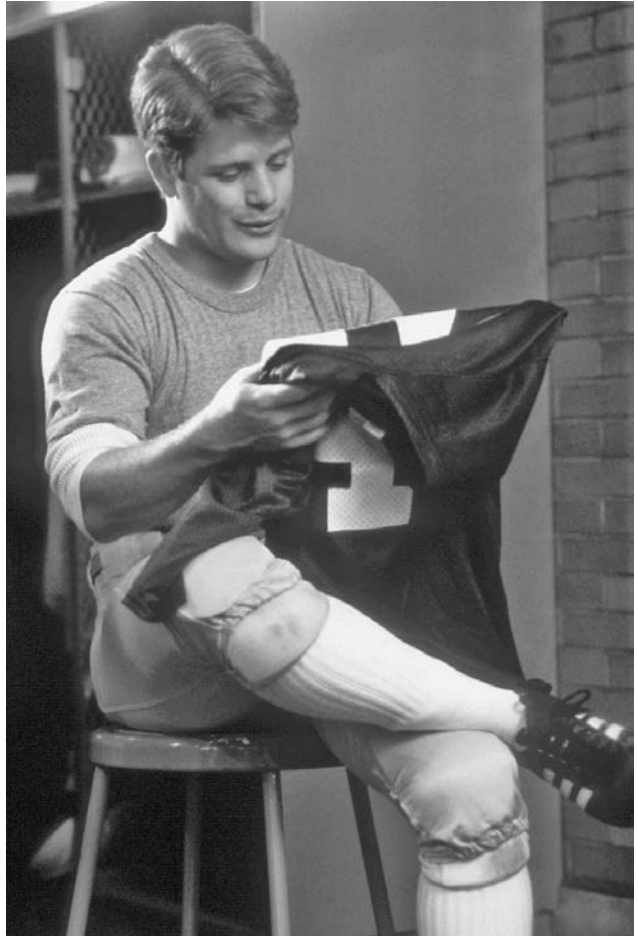
The sports film comedy is a subgenre in which sports, athletes, or sports-related themes and imagery serve as the backdrop to a comedic plot. Particularly popular in the last 25 years, some of the most important of these films are *The Bad News Bears* (1976), *Slap Shot* (1977), *Caddyshack* (1980), and *Angels in the Outfield* (1994). Sports-comedy films may center on mis-achievement as a plot device, though the narrative arc frequently brings the protagonist to a positive resolution.

Geopolitical antagonisms, notably Cold War themes, have been featured in the boxing subgenre, most significantly in the *Rocky* series. *Rocky IV* (1985) is perhaps the most obvious example of the filmic expression of these tensions and also has the distinction of being the most financially successful of all the *Rocky* films. More recent innovations in this subgenre are films such as *Fight Club* (1999) and the critically acclaimed *The Wrestler* (2008).

Social commentary is another important subgenre of the sports film. In films such as *Hoosiers* (1986), *The Hurricane* (1999), *Remember the Titans* (2000), and *Love and Basketball* (2000), sports themes have served as the backdrop for an exploration of issues such as race, class, and gender. These four films in particular have received critical acclaim in the form of Academy Awards, Golden Globe Awards, and recognition at international film festivals. Much the same can be said of *Ali* (2001), which was honored with two Oscar nominations and numerous festival awards. Although these social commentary sports films have been well received by audiences, some critics have suggested that they tend to glamorize race relations, ignoring the important struggles waged by real men and women attempting to achieve civil and political equality.

It may be that the film industry's desire for commercial success has forced filmmakers to produce movies that skirt some of the more divisive issues that still plague America.

Finally, the coming-of-age film is another important subcategory of the sports film genre. The aforementioned *Hoosiers*, as well as *Rudy* (1993) and *Invincible* (2006), are representative of this subgenre. The basic thematic narrative—that the protagonist, against all odds, overcomes a set of obstacles in order to achieve social acceptance, personal satisfaction, or a transformation in the eyes of his peers—though it sometimes unfolds in diverse and often complex ways, is basically followed through in these films. Although the central characters generally achieve some sort of fantastic and/or improbable feat whose acceptance requires a certain suspension of disbelief on the part of the viewer, the social significance of these films cannot be understated, especially for young adult males. Playing off of



Actor Sean Astin in a scene from the 1993 film *Rudy*, directed by David Anspaugh. (Photofest)

a more generalized myth of American exceptionalism, it may be that these coming-of-age sports films are so popular because they act to reassure vulnerable young men that should they work hard enough, there is always a “possibility of the extraordinary.”

Generally speaking, sports films have not featured significantly in defining American cinema, in the sense that the genre is often seen as either fringe or as not providing the ideal setting for the most compelling storytelling, the preference being given to more “serious” dramatic backdrops. At the same time, Toronto recently held North America's first Sports Film Festival, perhaps presaging the emergence or acceptance of the genre within a more serious milieu.

Sports movies have proven to be extremely popular, perhaps because their storylines are almost always redemptive. Because of their popularity, and because these pictures tend to be very profitable, they will most likely continue to be made. As long as sports films weave racial, nationalist, gender, or human interest stories into the fabric of

narratives based on athletic figures or themes, the genre will continue to gain critical respect.

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—John M. Mullin

STUDIO SYSTEM, THE. Although the official studio system era ran from 1930 to 1949, the control that major studios have had over film production and consumption extends far beyond this period. Eight major studios worked to prevent competition in a way that served to standardize not just modes of production and distribution but also the ways in which audiences came to understand the new filmic medium. These studios determined how movies should look, feel, and sound by rigidly defining the stories, plots, feature lengths, and “star quality” of individual pictures. This homogeneity can, in large part, be attributed to the rise of the studio system.

The studio system structure allowed the film industry to weather large technological and cultural changes that might have otherwise meant the downfall of major producers. Sound, for example, came suddenly to the motion picture industry, but the transition from silent films to “talkies” went relatively smoothly, primarily because of the existing (although still developing) studio system. Warner Bros. and Fox led the way toward full industry conversion to sound, something that was accomplished by 1930, only three years after the release of *The Jazz Singer*, the first talking motion picture.

The dawn of the twentieth century saw a great many fledgling filmmakers experimenting with the new medium of moving pictures. As the first decade of the new century came to a close, however, powerful figures in what was now an emerging industry formed the Motion Picture Patents Company (MPPC) in an attempt to create a monopoly on cinematic equipment. Although the MPPC failed, its formation marked the beginning point of the studio system, as now filmmakers sought to maximize profits and increase efficiency through enhancing and controlling production-line methods. This factorylike approach, with highly supervised, subdivided labor and standardized production methods and styles, led to the development of cinematic “studios,” a term used because it had a more artistic feel than did the term “factories.” Adolph Zukor (1873–1976) pioneered the “vertical integration” of the industry with the 1916 merger of the distribution company Paramount with the production companies Famous Players (New York) and Lasky Corporation (Los Angeles).

After the merger, studio heads at what came to be known as Famous Players-Lasky (later Paramount) developed a three-part strategy for filmmaking that applied modern business practices to the processes of contracting stars and executives, distribution, and

exhibition. Initiating this strategy, studio heads at Famous-Players Lasky signed popular actors such as Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks to highly restrictive contracts. These stars served to create a kind of brand loyalty to the studio: fans became faithful to movie stars, and because these stars were signed to contracts with a certain studio, fans unwittingly became faithful to that studio. For their part, studio heads tended to remain behind the scenes, where they wielded vast power and enjoyed long, largely unregulated executive careers. With profits high and stockholders happy, studio heads in the early days of Hollywood took home paychecks and bonuses far in excess of the national standard for business executives.

In regard to distribution, Famous Players-Lasky divided the process into three inter-related facets: advertising, sales and promotion, and service. During World War I, distribution expanded internationally, and the increasingly powerful studio took full advantage of this growth phenomenon. Famous Players-Lasky executives also sought to control the exhibition of films by concentrating on gaining control of most first-run, and a good number of second-run, cinemas. By the early 1930s, the “Big Five” (Loew’s, Inc., RKO, Twentieth Century-Fox, Warner Bros., and Paramount—formerly Famous Players-Lasky) and the “Little Three” (United Artists, Columbia, and Universal Studios) dominated the film industry.

Significantly, during the years that America was involved in World War II, film audiences began to flock to theaters. While this generated higher profits for the major studios, it also created a demand for the production of more films. This demand allowed independent filmmakers to edge their way into the system by creating smaller studios. Usually headed by stars, directors, or producers, independent production studios making just one or two films at a time began to flourish. With the 1949 Supreme Court decision in *United States v. Paramount*, a series of delayed and ongoing antitrust cases against the Big Eight were resolved, forcing these companies to sell their theater chains and discontinue block booking. As a result, profits from exhibition, the major studios’ biggest source of revenue, crumbled. The 1950s saw the Big Eight producing fewer, but bigger, films—usually historical epics and westerns, serving mainly to finance movies produced by independents in exchange for distribution rights or outright ownership of the final picture. During the 1960s, studios relied mostly on selling old films to TV in order to generate income. The release and phenomenal success of the Universal picture *Jaws* in 1975, however, changed everything, as after this point, the major studios began to concentrate on producing at least one high-budget “block-buster” per year whose revenues could sustain them, even if their smaller pictures lost money. After the 1970s, then, independent filmmaking became increasingly precarious, while the major studios once again rose to power.

See also: Independent Film, The; Screenplay and the Screenwriter, The

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—Molly K. B. Varley

SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL, THE. Certainly one of the most important annual events in American cinema, the Sundance Film Festival has also become a significant celebratory point of origin for independent cinema, mentioned alongside the festivals in Cannes, Venice, Toronto and Berlin. This event takes place every January in the little snowy winter station of Park City, Utah. Annually, the Hollywood smart set meets at what is now actor/director Robert Redford's "Sundance Village," a rustic resort area nestled in the scenic canyon beneath soaring Mount Timpanogos. Resisting suggestions from big-city developers to build fabulous hotels and restaurants in the area after he purchased it in 1969, Redford was adamant that Sundance would remain a place where visitors could commune with nature and involve themselves in artistic pursuits.

The festival traces its roots to the concordant interests of the state of Utah's arts community, represented by Sterling van Wagenen, and the state's commercial needs, represented by Utah State Film Commissioner John Earle. Contrary to what many believe, Robert Redford was not the founder of the event, even if as a local resident he has been involved since the very beginning as the board's inaugural chairperson. Born as the Utah/US Film Festival in September 1978, its purpose was to screen retrospectives, short films, and movies not produced within the Hollywood system. Originally held in Salt Lake City, the festival was funded by the Utah Film Commission, industry sponsors, and donations.

It remained a local event, facing problems with financing and encountering difficulties in development until Redford took over the festival in 1981, becoming its president. Redford moved the festival to Park City, and it was renamed the United States Film and Video Festival; Lory Smith became the program director at that point. In 1985, Tony Safford became the new program director, and from that point forward, the festival was organized as a nonprofit association—the Sundance Institute. Redford was able to use his industry connections to gather together colleagues and friends in support of the event. In 1991, Geoffrey Gilmore was installed as program director, and the event was renamed the Sundance Film Festival, after Redford's character in the 1969 film *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*. In 1996, the Sundance Channel was launched. A corporate and artistic venture uniting Redford, Showtime Networks, and the Sundance Film Festival, the channel offers cable television viewers commercial-free, original programming.

Relying on hundreds of volunteers, Sundance is now spread across 10 days. Jury panels evaluate films divided into different categories: Independent Feature Films; American Spectrum; Frontier; Native Forum; Park City at Midnight; Premieres;

Shorts; From the Sundance Collection; and Special Screenings. Highly coveted prizes are awarded, including the Grand Jury Prize; the Sundance Special Jury Prize; the Freedom of Expression Award; the Audience Award; the Filmmaker Trophy; the Directing Award; the Excellence in Cinematography Award; and the Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award.

Continuing to support mainly low-budget, independent cinema, the festival has gained an international reputation. Often the point of origin for the screening of low-profile African American and Latin American films, Sundance has become an important stepping-stone for talented new directors, including Joel and Ethan Coen, Vincent Gallo, Jim Jarmusch, Robert Rodriguez, Steven Soderbergh, and Quentin Tarantino.

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—*Laëtitia Baltz*

SUPERHERO IN FILM, THE. Superheroes appeared in films soon after they first graced the pages of comic books. While often dismissed as static, shallow characters, superheroes actually embody the highest ideals of heroism, self-sacrifice, and devotion. Interestingly, they are also often revealed to be alienated and deeply troubled individuals. The dominant theme in superhero films is power and the moral ambiguities of its use. As the genre has evolved, other films have sought to deconstruct the myth of the superhero and its ambiguous place in society.

Movie serials starring Captain Marvel (1941), Batman (1943, 1949), the Phantom (1943), and Superman (1948, 1950) appeared soon after comic book superheroes first emerged in print. However, the genre only became significant with the release of *Superman* in 1978. Beyond comics and films, Superman and other superheroes have an enormous presence across modern culture (Jones, 2004, 338–39). They are true multimedia characters, appearing in newspaper comic strips, novels, television, video games, toys, and, ubiquitously, in merchandising. The rich continuities of comic book universes, built over decades by numerous writers, artists, and fans, are vast narrative repositories (Kaveney, 2008, 25). Reynolds (1992), in one of the earliest scholarly works on the subject, defines superheroes as the protagonists of a "New Mythology," one which, while drawing from other mythologies, has evolved a complex folklore all its own.

Superheroes show obvious kinship with characters of classical mythology, pulp mysteries, westerns, and even Akira Kurosawa's samurai. While the genre has porous boundaries, a classic superhero character does have certain distinctive traits. Most conspicuous are their "secret identities" and fanciful costumes. Costumes typically embody or symbolize the hero's power or iconography (Batman's embrace of darkness, for example). Secret identities and costumes also personify the superhero's dual "persona," in which the individual and the hero may display different personalities and often conflicting needs (Kaveney, 2008). Superheroes above all are "super"; they are set apart from others by their "extraordinary natures" (Reynolds, 1992). This power may come from an individual's genetic heritage, such as the alien Kal-El (Superman) or the mutant X-Men. There are also heroes who command mystical forces, such as Johnny Blaze (*Ghost Rider*, 2007), whose powers are the Devil's treacherous gift. Owing to the science fiction themes that pervade superhero mythology, many heroes gain powers by scientific means or by accidents of "mad science." Peter Parker (*Spiderman*, 2002) receives his spiderlike powers as the result of the bite of a radioactive spider. Tony Stark (*Iron Man*, 2008) uses his engineering skill to build a body-enmeshing flying suit. Not all superheroes are conventionally "super-powered," however: by training his body and mind to their fullest potential, Bruce Wayne (*Batman*, 1989), for instance, becomes a superhero by sheer force of will (Brooker, 2000; Skoble, 2005).

As superheroes are defined by their uncanny abilities, it is tempting to view them as Godlike figures, or even to equate them with Friedrich Nietzsche's *übermensch*—his "overman" or "superman." Perhaps the superhero who has most often been subject to messianic characterizations is Superman (Hajdu, 2008). Indeed, in the musical *Godspell* (1973), Jesus literally wears a Superman shirt; in a monologue used in *Superman* and *Superman Returns* (2006), Superman's true (heavenly?) father, Jor-El, urges his "beloved son" to be a light unto the people of Earth; and in *Superman Returns*, Superman saves the day but must endure a passion sequence of sacrifice, death, and resurrection. The secular image of Nietzsche's superman is also apparent in superhero films. As Anton (2007) argues, the animated film *The Incredibles* (2004) is heavily laden with Nietzschean themes. The government bans superheroes and forces them into witness protection-style anonymity. Out of fear and jealousy, the mundane majority has mandated a mediocre equality that benefits no one: "If everyone is special, then no one is!" is the lament of a frustrated superchild and the gloat of a decidedly non-super villain.

If superheroes walk the Earth like gods, projecting the fantasies of (mostly male) adolescents, it is nonetheless clear that possessing their extraordinary powers comes with a price. Peter Parker, for example, perhaps the most introspective of film superheroes, makes it clear in *Spiderman* that his power is both a gift and a curse. Constantly meditating on the phrase "with great power comes great responsibility," Parker can delight in his new abilities, but ends up being tormented when his actions in preventing a crime indirectly lead to the murder of his uncle. In fact, while being a superhero can be rewarding, it can also be burdensome, as the heroic life seems always to be marked by turmoil. Mr. Incredible (*The Incredibles*) is even sued by a man he saves from a suicide attempt. In the *X-Men* trilogy (*X-Men*, 2000; *X-Men II*, 2003; and

X-Men: Last Stand, 2006), Mutants (the “good guys” who exhibit various remarkable abilities) are a hated minority. These films, in particular, play with the issue of homophobia. When one young Mutant “comes out” to his family in *X-Men II*, his mother bluntly asks him, “Can’t you just not be a Mutant?” In *X-Men: Last Stand*, a “cure” for the “disease” of mutation is developed by a pharmaceutical lab based on Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay; a storyline that provides viewers with a truly complex stew of political metaphors.

Though many superheroes enjoy the tacit endorsement of the authorities, they often face suspicion and even hostility from civic officials. Of course, this is not surprising, as superheroes are self-appointed, unaccountable to anyone, and frequently operate outside the law. The need for superheroes to fight crime can easily be seen as a critique of traditional law enforcement, which often appears too corrupt or bureaucratic to be effective. Vigilante-style superheroes (such as Batman, the Punisher, and Rorschach) do what the police fail to do: attack and overcome the most brutal criminals. When his family is murdered and the police seemingly do nothing, Frank Castle annihilates the criminals himself, beginning a one-man war on crime (*Punisher*, 2004, and *Punisher War Zone*, 2008). The same mission consumes Batman (*Batman*, 1989, and *Batman Begins* 2005), despite his close friendship with Police Commissioner Gordon. A similar motif occurs in *Darkman* (1990), *Daredevil* (2003), and *The Spirit* (2008). Rorschach (*Watchmen*, 2008) goes further, regarding the police as irrelevant and even attacking them when they obstruct him.

Superhero films are often cynically distrusting of traditional political, military, and economic elites. Many films (*Superman III*, 1983; *Batman Returns*, 1992; *The Phantom*, 1996; *Catwoman*, 2004; *The Fantastic Four*, 2005, to name a few) feature scheming capitalists, often dabbling in mad science for conquest and profit. *Iron Man* shows a defense contractor actively conspiring with terrorists. A subtler comment on capitalism appears in *Blade* (1998), in which a creepy council of vampires strongly resembles a board of directors. *The Toxic Avenger* (1985) battles an entire city government that is steeped in corruption as foul as the toxic waste from which they derive their wealth. The anarchistic V (*V for Vendetta*, 2005) confronts a sinister fascist regime in alternative-history Britain. Another alternative-history film, *Watchmen*, imagines a fifth-term President Nixon joking that an imminent nuclear war will finally destroy the liberal “Harvard Establishment.” In *The Hulk* (2003), Bruce Banner (who stress transforms into the superpowerful Hulk) is treated like a lab animal by a shady defense contractor and the ruthless General Ross. Curiously, for a film made so soon after 9/11, the U.S. military is the Hulk’s main adversary, and the Hulk is clearly the intended object of audience sympathy. In the semi-sequel *The Incredible Hulk* (2008), the military (symbolized by Ross and the violence-addicted Major Blonsky) have learned nothing; they still try to exploit the Hulk as a weapon. *The Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer* (2007), in a direct allusion to the Guantánamo Bay prisoner abuse scandal, features a government interrogator specializing in “harsh methods” (i.e., torture). The *X-Men* trilogy is perhaps the most mistrusting of political authority, frequently alluding to real-world oppression: the denial of African American civil rights; the internment of Japanese Americans; and the Holocaust.

Superhero worlds do require foes more colorful and dangerous than corrupt businessmen or politicians. Like Sherlock Holmes and his nemesis Moriarty, extraordinary heroes require equally remarkable enemies as proper foils. Super-villains also counterpoint the superhero's selfless use of power, especially villains who gain power by similar means as the heroes that confront them. As Brenzell (2005) suggests, the superhero's acquisition of enormous power is akin to Plato's story of the Ring of Gyges: How does one choose to use a ring that makes one invisible? The answer reveals a person's true character. For super-villains (as well as corrupt elites), power is simply the means that allows one to achieve the ends of self-aggrandizement, revenge, or the destruction of one's foes. Superman's arch-foe Lex Luthor famously uses his genius for murderous money-making schemes. In *Superman* and *Superman Returns*, his "real estate investments" involve the destruction of whole states and the deaths of millions. Comparatively tame in *Superman IV: The Quest for Peace*, Luthor merely wants to profit from the arms race. However, *Superman II* (1980) offers the clearest analogy to the Ring of Gyges. Three Kryptonian criminals, finding themselves with the same abilities as Superman, immediately claim lordship over the Earth. Destroying all opposition, they declare a "new order" with their leader Zod as absolute ruler. Seeing the American eagle on a White House carpet, Zod (who can fly like Superman) is ominously pleased that humans "are accustomed to worshiping things that fly." What makes Superman a hero, and Zod a monster, then, are not their abilities (which are identical) but their characters. Black-bearded and clothed, Zod strikes a satanic pose, even walking on water at one point to affirm his antimessianic nature. He never considers using his power for anything but personal gain. In contrast is Superman's Christ-like willingness to suffer, even die, for truth, justice, and the American way. He and other superheroes answer the dilemma of the Ring of Gyges by following a moral code transcending both self-interest and loyalty to the state. Despite their flaws and weaknesses, in the final analysis, the power of the superhero is committed solely to the cause of justice (Reynolds, 1992).

A second major theme resonating in superhero films is the social isolation and troubled lives of heroes. The need to guard their secrets isolates superheroes and may force them to lie or even humiliate themselves; Clark Kent must play the fool to conceal that he is Superman, for example. Superheroes can also become isolated due to their sense of duty and the dangerous world they inhabit. In *Spiderman*, Peter Parker reluctantly conceals his love for Mary Jane Watson, fearing his enemies will harm her to get at him. When he finally admits his love for her in *Spiderman II*, the shadow of his "other self" darkens what should be a bright and shiny moment of happiness; he must immediately leave her to follow a police siren. His dual identity also threatens their relationship. In *Spiderman III*, when a grateful woman saved by Spiderman passionately kisses him, Mary Jane is understandably irate and demands to know whether he was "Spiderman" or "Peter Parker" at that moment. Perversely, all this secrecy does little to protect Mary Jane, who is abducted, in turn, by the principal villain in each Spiderman movie. While Spiderman may be an atypical superhero in managing normal romantic and family ties, those close to superheroes are frequently in danger, as

Lois Lane (*Superman II*), Vicky Vale (*Batman*), Betty Ross (*The Hulk*), Microchip (*Punisher War Zone*), and many others discover.

The tragic core of so many superhero sagas is the genre's darkest facet. A recurring superhero motif is a tragic origin: Superman is an orphan alien from a dead planet; Bruce Wayne (Batman) witnesses his parents' murder; and Wolverine (*X-Men* trilogy) is subjected to bizarre experiments. Tragedy appears to have completely shattered the personality of some characters. *Batman Returns* (1992) provocatively suggests that Bruce Wayne does not put on a costume to become Batman, but rather that Batman is the real man who occasionally puts on the "mask" of Bruce Wayne. Lamont Cranston (*The Shadow*, 1994) dreams of pulling away his skin to reveal another self beneath, a dream shared by *Watchmen*'s Nite Owl. Even more psychologically troubled is Rorschach (née Walter Kovacs), who refers to his inkblot-pattern mask as his "face" and tells a psychiatrist that he is only Rorschach because Kovacs is "gone." The Punisher and The Spirit simply declare their old identities to be dead. This lonely abyss can only be bridged by contact with other superheroes, a point best articulated in the *X-Men* movies where mutants find a safe haven in Professor Xavier's "School for the Gifted." Batman, despite his loner's instinct, creates a surrogate family with Alfred, Robin, and Batgirl (*Batman Forever*, 1995; *Batman and Robin*, 1997). The Fantastic Four also form a family, albeit a dysfunctional one. Even Rorschach is drawn to Nite Owl, his only friend.

Ironically, it may be that the figures who best understand the tortured existences of superheroes are their enemies. In *The Dark Knight* (2008), the Joker (who exemplifies pure chaos over against Batman's quest for order), in a perverse trope of the well-known line from *Jerry Maguire*, claims that he and Batman "complete each other." The Mutant war in the *X-Men* trilogy is rooted in the shattered friendship between Professor Xavier and Magneto. Heroes and villains often have interlinking origins: Daredevil, Batman, The Phantom, and Elektra (*Elektra*, 2005) all lose family members to men who later became their arch-enemies. Though Blade hunts the vampire who killed his pregnant mother, the attack is the very thing that provides the unborn Blade his vampirelike powers. The same accident created the Fantastic Four and their rival Dr. Doom. If superheroes and arch-villains somehow understand each other, then, it seems to be an understanding based on shared experiences of tragedy, loss, and estrangement.

As with any genre, superheroes are susceptible to parody and deconstruction. The sublime silliness of the *Batman* television series (1966–1968) casts an ambivalent shadow over superhero films, although some pictures like *Batman Forever* obviously embrace their camp legacy. Superheroes are such extreme characters that the line between drama and parody is often razor-thin. Transporting garishly attired characters from comic books to film always runs the risk of generating laughter. Films have also deconstructed the superhero's image of noble innocence. *Watchmen* is particularly grim, suggesting that if superheroes were real, besides being emotionally disturbed, they would be unlikely to make the world a better place. On a lighter note, *Mystery Men* (1999) uses superheroes to critique marketing culture. In this film, superhero Captain Amazing employs a publicist and wears a NASCAR-like costume covered

with the logos of his corporate sponsors. He even secretly engineers the release of his arch-enemy to boost his ratings. *The Specials* (2000) exist in a similar world of commercial exploitation. As only the “sixth or seventh greatest superhero team,” the *Specials* are well-meaning losers. A line of wildly inaccurate *Specials* action figures only highlights their total impotence as heroes; even their merchandising is awful. Ironically, the *Specials* get a moment to shine in an emergency because the “government-sponsored” Crusaders are on a press tour and unavailable. *Dr. Horrible’s Sing-along Blog* (2008) subverts the genre further by fully inverting the hero-villain relationship. The alleged hero Captain Hammer is a sex-crazed, egomaniacal jerk, while mad scientist Dr. Horrible is a sympathetic (and ultimately tragic) figure. The slightly askew world of comic book fans has also been glimpsed in *Comic Book: The Movie* (2004), a mockumentary set at the San Diego Comic-Con. A super-fanboy played by Mark Hamill dresses as fictional 1940s superhero Commander Courage in order to defend the character from crass commercial exploitation. This is also an interesting reversal, as the fan uses the hero’s own iconography in order to rescue the hero.

The superhero concept is so highly elastic that it has been reworked in surprising ways on television. No one on *Heroes* (premiered in 2006) ever dons a cape, but the series draws freely on superhero thematic traditions, especially the sense of isolation. As their powers manifest themselves, *Heroes’* characters desperately try to maintain a sense of normalcy, though the aptly named Hiro Nakamura experiences the delight of a true comic book geek. Dexter Morgan, the forensic scientist-cum-serial killer of *Dexter* (premiered in 2006), also resembles a superhero insofar as he avenges crime, lives by a rigid code of conduct, and expends considerable effort keeping his secrets. In the episode “Dark Defender,” Dexter even dreams of himself as a superhero preventing his mother’s murder (the trauma that warped his own life). Discussing horror television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997–2003), Kaveney (2008, 204) simply declares that “Buffy is a superhero,” as she clearly fits the same thematic profile as Spiderman. While not adaptations of existing characters, and eschewing many genre conventions, these series show the infinite adaptability of the superhero concept.

While giving audiences colorful characters and dynamic action, superhero films have also explored the emotional and moral quandaries of power. Superheroes represent noble ideals but are often deeply troubled characters unsure of their place in the world. As a genre, superhero films have flourished in part because of the basic humanity of the characters. Despite their awesome powers, though, or perhaps because of them, in the final analysis they are “all too human.”

See also: Action-Adventure Film, The

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—Karl Leib

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TELEVISION. Television, though technologically feasible by the 1930s and introduced to a broad American audience at the 1939 World's Fair, first became a significant part of the entertainment landscape a decade later, with the beginning of nationwide network broadcasting. The movie industry initially dismissed television as an inferior product. Movies offered high production values, familiar stars, crisp color pictures, rich sound, and the immersive experience provided by big screens and darkened auditoriums, none of which television could match. Television, however, had two advantages: the programming was free, and it came to viewers in their living rooms.

Over the course of the 1950s, Hollywood shifted from seeing television as a passing fad to seeing it as a competitor. The movie industry sought, therefore, to highlight the differences between what viewers could find in their local theater and what they could find in their living room. The first features shot using Cinerama, a process that used multiple cameras to create an ultra-wide-screen image, appeared as special attractions at a select number of specially equipped theaters in 1952—so did *Bwana Devil*, the first feature film designed to be viewed in 3-D. CinemaScope, which, although it produced a wide-screen image less expansive than Cinerama, required less elaborate technology, also began to expand the silver screen during this period. Other, competing widescreen processes followed: Vistavision in 1954, Todd-AO in 1955, and Technirama in 1956. Cinerama and 3-D eventually faded while wide-screen formats (along with improvements in color and sound) lasted; but none of it slowed the steady defection of movie audiences to television.

Treating television as an alternative channel for distributing movies proved to be a more effective, and more sustainable, strategy. Minor studios like Republic and Monogram began supplying their low-budget, formulaic westerns to TV networks as early as 1950, and RKO—its corporate hand forced by bankruptcy—became the first of the major studios to follow suit, selling a package of pre-1948 titles to New York television station WOR in late 1954. Run on weekday evenings under the umbrella title *The Million Dollar Movie*, the RKO films proved popular with viewers. The other studios followed RKO's lead, and pre-1948 movies became a staple of early morning, late night, and weekend programming nationwide. The advent of color television led

the three major broadcast networks to negotiate, in the early 1960s, for the rights to air recent Technicolor films during evening “prime-time” hours. NBC, the network most aggressively committed to color, launched *Saturday Night at the Movies* at the beginning of the 1961–62 season, and ABC followed with *Sunday Night at the Movies* at midseason, in early 1962. CBS, the most conservative of the networks, belatedly joined the trend at the start of the 1965–66 season.

Older black-and-white films had been attractive to broadcasters primarily as inexpensive time-fillers. Recent color films, on the other hand, drew substantial audiences. A 1968 broadcast of Alfred Hitchcock’s *The Birds* drew 40 percent of the viewing audience, and a two-night 1976 broadcast of *Gone with the Wind* drew 50 percent. Commercial time during such broadcasts commanded premium rates. Ford Motor Company, for example, paid \$2 million to be the sole sponsor for a network showing of *Bridge over the River Kwai* in 1966. The dual appeal of audience share and advertising revenue caused network “nights at the movies” to proliferate, until, by the early 1970s, the three networks were airing 10 prime-time movies each week. Ironically, the networks’ demand for theatrical feature films ultimately outstripped what the studios could supply, leading the studios to demand higher rental fees and the networks to search for a cheaper alternative. They found it in movies made directly for television, which came into their own in the early 1970s.

Produced on budgets of less than \$1 million apiece, with small casts and limited use of location shooting and special effects, made-for-television movies were reminiscent of the B-pictures of the 1930s and 1940s. Most were little more than efficient, formulaic genre stories, but a surprising number were extraordinarily successful. *Brian’s Song* (1971), for instance, the story of Chicago Bears running back Gale Sayers’s friendship with his dying teammate, Brian Piccolo, drew accolades from the NAACP and the American Cancer Society, and unaccustomed tears from many male viewers. *A Case of Rape* (1974), starring Elizabeth Montgomery, the bubbly star of the popular sitcom *Bewitched*, savagely indicted the legal system for its blame-the-victim approach to the crime. *The Day After* (1983) shocked Cold War audiences with its unsparing depiction of life after a nuclear attack, and ended with a stark title card declaring that the real thing would be far worse.

The value of theatrical features as prime-time “event programming” eroded in the late 1970s and early 1980s with the rise of cable television and videocassette recorders (VCRs). Pay-cable networks like HBO, Showtime, and The Movie Channel and videocassette rental stores offered movie-hungry subscribers living-room access to the latest releases sooner than the broadcast networks could. They also presented the films precisely as shown in theaters: edited neither for length nor potentially objectionable content, and uninterrupted by commercials. The networks continued to air theatrical movies—the initial network broadcasts of *Jurassic Park* (1992) and *Schindler’s List* (1993) drew substantial audiences in 1995 and 1997—but “nights at the movies” no longer dominated network schedules.

“Basic cable” networks such as USA, TNT, Sci-Fi, and Lifetime also filled much of their schedules with movies. Two—American Movie Classics and Turner Classic Movies—specialized in showing feature films. Like independent “superstations” such

as Chicago's WGN and Atlanta's WTBS, they arranged multiyear deals with studios that gave them unlimited broadcast rights to packages of older, nonblockbuster films. Unlike the independent stations, they also had the resources to produce their own lines of made-for-television features. Several cable networks had, by the late 1990s, developed specialties in made-for-television productions: westerns on TNT, family dramas on The Hallmark Channel, and disaster stories on Sci-Fi.

Television is, in the early twenty-first century, no longer seen as a threat to the viability of the movies. The television *set* is, instead, the point at which multiple methods of delivering movies to audiences converge: the portal through which viewers can access movies via recordings; broadcast, cable, and satellite network showings; and pay-per-view offerings delivered by their cable or satellite provider. Whether this will continue to be the case once high-speed Internet access becomes as ubiquitous as broadcast television remains to be seen.

See also: New Technologies in Filmmaking

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—A. Bowdoin Van Riper

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WAR FILM, THE. In 1975, Francis Ford Coppola began work on *Apocalypse Now*, his epic Vietnam War film. The wounds of America's conflict in Southeast Asia, suffered in the face of what was considered a shameful defeat, were still raw at the time. Because of this, American filmmakers were reluctant to use this war as a setting for combat pictures. Indeed, so controversial had America's involvement in Vietnam been that this conflict seemed off-limits even as the basis for a cinematic antiwar statement. Thus, with the exception of five very marginal films—*China Gate* (1957), *A Yank in Vietnam* (1964), *To the Shores of Hell* (1966), *Marine Battleground* (1966), and John Wayne's *The Green Berets* (1968)—the American film industry steered clear of the complex and divisive issues surrounding Vietnam until Coppola shifted his attention to this subject in the 1970s.

Coppola stressed that his Vietnam picture would not be merely another standard remake of previous American war films. Rather, he would produce a film that would break from the cinematic combat formula that had marked the glut of World War II films made between the 1940s and the 1970s. In so doing, said Coppola, his film would not only disclose the horror and the madness of combat, it would act to overturn the notion of the invincible American hero fighting a just war in order to maintain the democratic stability and religious freedom of the United States, and, indeed, of the entire world. Although production problems would delay the release of *Apocalypse Now* until 1979, causing it to lose its status as the first true Vietnam movie to Michael Cimino's *The Deer Hunter* and Hal Ashby's *Coming Home*, both of which came out in 1978, the release of Coppola's film seemed to mark the point at which Hollywood would no longer be able simply to depict America's armed forces gloriously subduing evil enemies, as it had so often done in portraying earlier conflicts in which the United States had been involved.

Admittedly, even though the paradigms of the World War II combat film were rendered temporarily inappropriate after the major Vietnam pictures began to be released in the late 1970s, American filmmakers did not completely forget about the second Great War during this period. *The Americanization of Emily*, for example, was released in 1964; *Catch 22* in 1970; *Midway* in 1976; the big-budget, star-laden *A Bridge Too*



Frank Capra (right) handles film for the series *Why We Fight* (1943–1945). (U.S. War Department/Photofest)

Far in 1977; *The Big Red One* in 1980; *The Philadelphia Experiment* in 1985; *The Last Days of Patton* in 1986; *Fat Man and Little Boy* in 1989; and *Memphis Belle* in 1990. Beyond these few offerings, however, it seemed as if the days of the World War II combat picture were over.

Interestingly, although filmmakers such as David Nutter, with his film *Cease Fire* (1983); Roland Joffé, with *The Killing Fields* (1984); Oliver Stone, with his trilogy *Platoon* (1986), *Born on the Fourth of July* (1989), and *Heaven & Earth* (1993); Stanley Kubrick, with *Full Metal Jacket* (1987); and Brian De Palma, with *Casualties of War* (1989), would follow Coppola's lead during the 1980s and early 1990s in making their own antiwar pictures about the Vietnam conflict, this decade would also witness the emergence of a peculiar, ahistorical sort of Vietnam combat movie. As the decade unfolded, certain U.S. filmmakers began to do their part in rebuilding the country's shattered military confidence by producing a string of films that sought to convince the American public that even if the war in Vietnam could not be won on the ground, it could nevertheless be won on the screen. Among the most significant of these distinctive Vietnam films were *Uncommon Valor* (1983), starring Gene Hackman as Colonel Cal Rhodes; *Rambo: First Blood Part II* (1985), starring Sylvester Stallone as John J. Rambo; and *Missing in Action, Part I* (1984), *Part II* (1985), and *Part III*

(1988), starring Chuck Norris as Colonel James Braddock. Significantly, all of these films depicted their protagonists as figures whom the U.S. government had failed by not allowing them to win the struggle in Southeast Asia. Now, however, as enlightened veterans, Rhodes, Rambo and Braddock would have the chance to win the war by returning to Vietnam and freeing the U.S. prisoners of war who continued to languish in this country long after the conflict had ended.

It does not appear to be a coincidence that films such as *Uncommon Valor*, *Rambo: First Blood Part II*, and *Missing in Action, Part I, Part II*, and *Part III* became wildly popular during the years that Ronald Reagan was president. Reagan, after all, had come into office in the spring of 1981 determined to overturn what came to be called the "Vietnam syndrome," America's reluctance to commit its troops to overseas conflicts. He was also seen by many Americans as the remedy for the timidity of his predecessor, Jimmy Carter, who had been both diplomatically and militarily ineffectual in securing the release of the hostages in Iran. Interestingly, the Iranian hostages were freed within hours of Reagan's 1981 inauguration, a sign to many in the United States that the new president would not suffer the same humiliations that President Carter had been forced to endure. Indeed, so powerful was Reagan that even an assassin's bullet and the deaths of 200 U.S. Marines in Beirut could not slow him in his quest both to rebuild America's military and to resurrect the country's tarnished image. Surviving his assassination attempt, when Lincoln, Garfield, McKinley, and Kennedy had not survived theirs, Reagan became for many Americans a larger-than-life character. In fact, many saw Reagan's survival not only as a personal triumph but as a national one, as well.

Some film historians have argued that films like *Uncommon Valor*, *Rambo*, and *Missing in Action* were cinematic representations of Reagan's personal and political heroism. Although this point certainly seems to be correct, it is important to note that even though these films reinforced the image of a newly born U.S. political and military power, they also presented their audiences with protagonists who were fighting not only against an insidious foreign enemy but also against their own government. These films, then, although they presented their protagonists as cinematic reflections of Reagan as a new military president, were not pictures about the *era* of that heroic president. This was so, it seems, because Vietnam combat pictures, even those like *Uncommon Valor*, *Rambo*, and *Missing in Action*, were still films about a war that for most Americans was better left in the past. Oddly enough, it would be the reemergence of the World War II combat film that would allow the great courage of Reagan, and the "Reagan Era," to be defined in all its glory.

In an extremely important way, the birth of American cinema made it possible for the United States to shape its twentieth-century self-image in a dramatically new fashion. Public support for the late nineteenth-century Spanish-American conflict was initially stirred by the reports of muckraking journalists who sent back spectacular stories from Cuba detailing the heroics of American and Cuban forces. The editors of America's newspapers did their part by publishing those muckraking stories accompanied by prowar illustrations depicting such things as cheering crowds sending their troops off to war or Uncle Sam hailing his "latest, greatest, shortest war." News

agencies also utilized the recently developed form of reportage that would come to be known as photojournalism, releasing heroic and often startling images of brave American troops and starving Cubans. Film, however, would become the medium of choice for spreading America's message concerning the "march of freedom" in Cuba.

Ironically, none of the moving pictures that were shot in Cuba provided audiences with images of the actual fighting that was taking place on the island. This was due, in large part, to improvements in artillery and rifle technology, which allowed soldiers to fire from longer distances while remaining under cover; quite simply, filmmakers could rarely get close enough to the action to be able to record it. Thus, while newspapers promised combat films filled with action scenes, what was more often produced were pictures about the human side of war: exhausted troops moving from place to place; injured soldiers languishing in hospitals; and images of the dead and dying on the battlefields.

In order to produce the cinematic spectacle of war for which audiences clamored, narrative filmmakers in America, far from the real conflict, created staged scenes of combat and U.S. victories. Indeed, just a few short hours after the United States declared war on Spain, Albert Smith and the British-born J. Stuart Blackton, having sat in their office watching jubilant, patriotic crowds fill the streets of New York City, pulled together a film crew and produced for the Vitagraph Company what is considered the first commercial combat picture, *Tearing Down the Spanish Flag*. The short film, a single scene with a flagpole set against the sky and a pair of hands reaching up and taking down the Spanish flag and replacing it with Old Glory, was shot on a Manhattan rooftop.

Tearing Down the Spanish Flag was quickly released, and soon thousands of New Yorkers sat in vaudeville houses watching Smith and Blackton's filmic recreation of a U.S. seizure of a Spanish government installation in Havana, which, eerily enough, was still weeks away from being realized. Evidently, the fact that the film images were fabricated did not matter to audiences. Indeed, *Tearing Down the Spanish Flag* proved to be so popular with viewers that Blackton and Smith lost no time in producing another combat picture, *The Battle of Santiago Bay*, a filmic depiction of the victory of the U.S. Navy over the Spanish fleet in Cuba. Still far removed from the actual fighting, the innovative filmmakers recreated their combat scenes in a bathtub, with battleship cutouts and smoke blown across the camera lens from a cigarette handled by Blackton's wife.

As Europe entered the first years of the Great War, American filmmakers began to make isolationist pictures such as *Be Neutral* (1914), *War is Hell* (1915), and *The Terrors of War* (1917). These films were very different from the pro-interventionist pictures that had appeared at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. Instead, they were powerful cinematic representations of President Woodrow Wilson's 1914 isolationist call for the public to be "neutral in fact as well as in name," "impartial in thought as well as action." These films, it seems, reinforced the message of the president's first term: the European conflict was "a war with which we have nothing to do, whose causes cannot touch us."

By the time America entered World War I in 1917, during Wilson's second term, thousands of Americans were packing theaters each week, eager to watch the latest cinematic release. Much of this enthusiasm for the cinema was a result of the extraordinarily successful release of D. W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* in 1915, a film that President Wilson screened in the White House and which he heartily supported. Interestingly, the racist themes articulated in Griffith's film would set the tone for the filmic depiction of the World War II combat enemy as a heartless and debased threat to the civilized world, one that must be stopped at all costs. In his own 1915 film *The Battle Cry of Peace*, for example, J. Stuart Blackton echoed the warning of Griffith's film, calling for a buildup of armaments in order, now, to protect the women and children of America from the "leering, lustling, licentious" Huns.

For his part, President Wilson turned to a longtime supporter, George Creel, to form a government-backed propaganda organization that could assist him in convincing the American people that his decision to involve America in the war was the right one. Creel responded by creating the Committee on Public Information. Realizing the impact that *Birth of a Nation* had had on American audiences, Creel called on his entertainment industry associates to produce pictures that could be used to demonstrate the wholesomeness of American life and to "slander all things German." They responded with films such as *The Prussian Cur*, *The Hun Within*, and *The Kaiser: The Beast of Berlin* (all 1918).

America's entry into the war gave rise to a disturbing sense of exclusionary nationalism at home, one that was characterized by anti-Germanism, the rise of the second Ku Klux Klan, the Red Scare, and the Palmer raids. Given the chauvinism that marked the wartime and postwar periods in America, it would seem quite natural that the interwar years that stretched from 1919 to 1939 would be characterized by the production of combat films depicting the United States as the heroic power that had turned the tide in a global conflict waged to make the world "safe for democracy." Interestingly, though, once the real costs of this awful struggle were finally revealed, American filmmakers began to produce their first antiwar pictures.

Somewhat unexpectedly, one of the messengers for this shift in film industry sensibilities was D. W. Griffith, whose 1918 *Hearts of the World* contributed to the attempt to turn aside the prowar tide of World War I combat cinema. Although Griffith, like wartime directors before him, still portrayed the German military as "evil Huns" in his film, he also filled *Hearts of the World* with haunting scenes that effectively depicted the horror of war, none more notable than the one in which a dazed Marie (Lillian Gish) wanders through the desolation of the battlefield dragging what had once been the unspoiled symbol of her love and commitment to another, her now torn and filthy wedding dress.

The first of the American antiwar epics was King Vidor's *The Big Parade*, which premiered at Grauman's Egyptian Theatre on November 11, 1925. Vidor focused his film on the experiences of three young soldiers, who, despite stemming from very different backgrounds, become comrades-in-arms as they attempt to survive the frightening situations that have been forced upon them. In the end, two of these tragic friends lose their lives, while the third returns home missing a leg. Although some critics ultimately

accused Vidor of making a picture that seemed at once too farcical and too sentimental, the film nevertheless succeeded in demonstrating to audiences that there were different ways of looking at war.

Perhaps the greatest of the post-World War I American combat films was Lewis Milestone's 1930 *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Based on the Erich Maria Remarque novel, *All Quiet on the Western Front* describes the brutality of war through the eyes of a group of German schoolboys. Originally conceived as a silent movie, the film begins with glorious sound, as the protagonist, Paul Bäumer (Lew Ayres), and his schoolboy friends are whipped into a nationalistic frenzy by their idealistic teacher. Eager to fight for the motherland, the boys enlist and are promptly dispatched to the front. In the midst of combat, though, they are quickly disabused of their naive attitudes toward war, as the schoolboys are forced to become men when they are unceremoniously introduced to the terrible truth of war.

The antiwar sentiments expressed in films such as *All Quiet on the Western Front* would permeate American combat pictures during the interwar years. This would all change dramatically, however, once combat films began to be made about America's participation in World War II. Ironically, one of the first steps taken by the film industry in moving away from the production of antiwar combat pictures was to rerelease *All Quiet on the Western Front*. Audiences viewed the film after first being shown newsreel footage of the fiery aftermath of Pearl Harbor, footage that was accompanied by a commentator's voice-over ordering them to "Look at these pictures and get mad and stay mad!" As one might expect, this strange juxtaposition of a prowar newsreel and an antiwar narrative film left audiences confused, and they protested loudly to the exhibitors. Once the Office of War Information became aware of these protests, the antiwar films of the post-World War I period were quickly withdrawn from theaters.

What was needed at this point was a film about World War I that was vastly different from *All Quiet on the Western Front*, one that was framed by what was rapidly becoming the prowar sensibility of World War II America. *Sergeant York* was just such a picture. Directed by Howard Hawks and starring Gary Cooper, this 1941 film presented audiences with a tortured protagonist who struggles to reconcile his Christian moral code with his powerful sense of patriotism, before coming to the point where he realizes that the fight for freedom can be understood as a holy cause. While *Sergeant York* defined a first moment in the American cinema's move away from pacifism, however, the films that would truly come to define the combat consciousness of World War II were focused not on rugged individuals like York standing apart from their comrades-in-arms, but on the hero bound to "a team, the crew, the corps" (Basinger, 1986).

Many of the narrative films that would come to define the new mythos of World War II would take their lead from the Bureau of Motion Pictures, a government agency that set about enlisting the support of the movie industry to "aid the war effort" and help "maintain public morale." Obviously, the Bureau of Motion Pictures was in many respects a 1940s version of the film production division of George Creel's World War I Committee on Public Information. Probably the best known of the Hollywood directors that would eventually be connected to the Bureau of Motion Pictures was Frank Capra, who had offered his services to the War Department immediately after the

Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Commissioned in the Army on December 8, 1941, Capra would be instrumental in producing a series of films entitled *Why We Fight*.

Seven films were planned for the *Why We Fight* series. To assist him with the project, Capra called on his screenwriting colleagues in Hollywood. Putting together a team of seven writers, he assigned to each the task of developing a documentary-style script that covered a particular short period of the decade leading up to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The first film in the series was called *Prelude to War*, and it sought to depict the “ugliness of totalitarianism” by way of recreating the Japanese attack on Manchuria and the destruction of Ethiopia by Italy. Second in the series was *The Nazis Strike*, which detailed Hitler’s rise to power in the early 1930s, his successful push to recover the Rhineland, the Anschluss with Austria, the overthrow of Czechoslovakia after the Munich Conference, and finally, the Blitzkrieg of Poland.

The films that followed in the series explored the conflict as it was being waged in different parts of the world: *Divide and Conquer* detailed the “Nazi seizure of the Low Countries” and the ultimate collapse of France; *The Battle of Britain* showed the valiant attempt by the members of the British Royal Air Force to defend their homeland; *The Battle of Russia* briefly outlined the history of Russia, examined the fighting that occurred around Leningrad and Moscow, and showed the defeat of the German Sixth Army at Stalingrad; and *The Battle of China* disclosed Japan’s strategy to use the resources of China to conquer the rest of Asia. American viewers never saw the final picture in the series, *War Comes to America*, simply because the great conflict ended before it was completed. The film, however, demonstrated the nation’s shifting sensibilities toward the global conflict: America had now become the guiding force arrayed against the evil of the Axis nations and a just and benevolent community “fighting for the freedoms and ideals of American life and culture” (Myers, 1998).

One of the most important narrative films embodying the post-Pearl Harbor, pro-war sentiments of 1940s America was *Air Force* (1943). Featuring what quickly became, after the release of the individually oriented *Sergeant York*, the foundational element of combat films made during the war years—the small, ethnically diverse combat group brought together by a democratic cause—*Air Force* was a circumscribed reenactment of the first months of America’s involvement in World War II. Directed by Howard Hawks, the film depicts the experiences of the crew of the *Mary Ann*, a B-17 that is ordered to the Philippines to assist in the fight against the Japanese after their attack on Pearl Harbor. During its harrowing flight across the Pacific, just ahead of the pursuing Japanese, the crew listens to President Roosevelt’s declaration to Congress, one that calls for an “absolute victory” over the “treacherous enemy.” Fleeing as Japanese forces overrun the Philippines, the *Mary Ann* ultimately heads for Australia. Alone in a vast, forbidding sky, the American plane comes across a huge Japanese fleet and radios its position to the Air Force. Despite being low on fuel, the *Mary Ann* circles the ships until the air cavalry finally arrives and destroys the Japanese fleet, turning the tide in the battle for the Pacific. In the concluding act, the *Mary Ann*, now out of fuel, crash-lands on the Australian shore. As the film ends, the surviving crew members are preparing a raid on Tokyo, the opening salvo in America’s final push toward victory over Japan.

Other films made during the war years depicting the conflict with Japan and featuring ethnically diverse combat units included *Wake Island* (1942), *Flying Tigers* (1942), *Destination Tokyo* (1943), *Bataan* (1943), *Thirty Seconds over Tokyo* (1944), *Back to Bataan* (1945), and *Objective Burma!* (1945). Significantly, the members of the combat crews in these films quickly began to be understood by film audiences as microcosmic representatives of the American people. Engaged in a struggle to make the world “safe for democracy,” as Woodrow Wilson had called on Americas to do during the Great War, these men, although always headed by a courageous and more than capable leader, succeeded because they were a team infused with the ideals that made the United States a strong, independent, and free nation.

The combat crew would also be the central element of the World War II combat films set in Europe. Perhaps because America did not commit significant numbers of troops to the European conflict until 1944, the bulk of these films would not begin to be made until the actual war was almost at its end. This is important to note, as the combat films that were produced during and after 1945 had a vastly different feel than those that had been created toward the end of and after World War I. Like the combat pictures made during that war, those made during the early years of World War II were overwhelmingly prowar. Contrary to what occurred after World War I ended, however, the disclosure of the staggering costs of the second great global conflict did not lead to the production of antiwar films as World War II came to a close. Rather, the films that were made as World War II reached its concluding stages and finally ended were almost exclusively prowar pictures that sought to demonstrate the “nobility of our fighting and winning” this mid-century conflict.

Perhaps the best of the Europe-based World War II films that were produced and released during the final days of the conflict were *The Story of G.I. Joe* (1945) and *A Walk in the Sun* (1945). Building on and extending the “common man” theme that had come to define the Pacific-conflict pictures, both of these films depicted small, ethnically diverse squads of soldiers caught up in what was now being characterized as the “glory of war.” After the war ended, similar films set in Europe would follow: *Fighter Squadron* (1948); *Battleground* (1949); *Twelve O’Clock High* (1949); *Force of Arms* (1951); *Thunderbirds* (1952); *Stalag 17* (1953); *To Hell and Back* (1955); *D-Day, the Sixth of June* (1956); *Hell Is for Heroes* (1962); *The Longest Day* (1962); *The Great Escape* (1963); and *The Battle of Bulge* (1965), for example. Combat units would also continue to be depicted, after the war ended, in films set in the Pacific: *The Sands of Iwo Jima* (1949), for instance; and *Flying Leathernecks* (1951); *Operation Pacific* (1951); *Okinawa* (1952); *From Here to Eternity* (1953); *The Caine Mutiny* (1954); *Battle Cry* (1955); *Battle Stations* (1956); *Hellcats of the Navy* (1957); *The Naked and the Dead* (1958); *Hell in the Pacific* (1968); and *Tora! Tora! Tora!* (1970).

Oddly enough, many of these World War II combat films would be made during the early years of the Cold War, and more specifically during the time that the United States was involved in the Korean War. Although a number of American filmmakers did turn their attention to the conflict in Korea, in comparison to the number of combat pictures that were made about World War II, there were relatively few made about the Korean War. Much of this was no doubt due to the fact that the struggle in Korea,

although extremely costly in regard to both blood and treasure—some 33,000 Americans died and the United States spent over \$20 billion—was not a popular war. Indeed, most Americans, pointing to the fact that President Truman had never asked Congress for a declaration of war, claimed that the struggle was really little more than a Cold War “police action.” Although the conflict, like World War II, “still pitted good against well-perceived evil,” most people in the United States failed to embrace the struggle in Korea as they had that which had ensued during World War II; and if “Americans had a difficult time understanding the conflict as the stalemate dragged on, Hollywood had as difficult a time portraying a conflict shaded in gray instead of painted in the easily defined black and white of World War II” (Suid, 2002).

Of the few combat films made about the Korean War, then, most followed the combat crew pattern of World War II pictures—*Fixed Bayonets* (1951), *One Minute to Zero* (1952), *Retreat, Hell!* (1952), *Battle Hymn* (1957), and *Pork Chop Hill* (1959), for example. Others detailed communist abuses—*Prisoner of War* (1954), for instance, which starred future president Ronald Reagan—or the devious sensibilities of our Cold War enemies—*The Manchurian Candidate* (1967), for example, which concerned a communist plot to bring down America through the use of brainwashed U.S. military veterans.

Ironically, by the time *The Manchurian Candidate* was released in 1967, the United States was hopelessly embroiled in Vietnam, with some 500,000 combat troops in Southeast Asia. As was mentioned earlier, though, as opposed to the many films made about World War II during the period that the United States was involved in that conflict, while we were involved in Vietnam very few films were made about the struggle in Southeast Asia—only *A Yank in Vietnam*, *To the Shores of Hell*, *Marine Battleground*, and *The Green Berets*. And while the vast majority of World War II combat pictures made after that war depicted the conflict as a heroic struggle to keep the world safe for democracy, the post-Vietnam-era films that were released during the 1970s, '80s, and early '90s were almost exclusively antiwar pictures. During this post-Vietnam War era, then, there certainly seemed to be no place for films that portrayed war in the heroic way that it had been depicted in so many World War II pictures.

All of this changed in 1998, however, when Steven Spielberg's highly anticipated *Saving Private Ryan* was released. Set during the days following the harrowing D-Day invasion of Normandy, the film tells the story of a squad of American soldiers, led by Captain John Miller (Tom Hanks), who are given the mission of finding Private James Ryan (Matt Damon), his family's sole-surviving son after his three brothers are killed in combat. After a 16-year hiatus from the promotional circuit, Spielberg decided that once the film was completed—and reports of its incredible violence surfaced, especially concerning a 24-minute sequence at the beginning of the film—he needed to go out on tour to talk about the picture. Sounding very much like Coppola had in the 1970s when he was promoting *Apocalypse Now*, Spielberg made it clear that his goal in making *Saving Private Ryan* had been to expose the horror of war, not to make yet another “Ramboesque extravaganza.” He had wanted to make a film that showed “the serious side of men in combat, the violence, the deaths, the dismemberments, the reality that luck often determines whether men live or die.” Indeed, during the

tour, Spielberg told America that in making *Private Ryan*, he was “trying to show something the war film itself hadn’t dared to show.” With this in mind, he had placed at the beginning of his film scenes—the most violent—in which he sought to “recreate the Omaha Beach landing [at Normandy] the way the veterans experienced it, not the way Hollywood producers and directors have imagined it” (quoted in Suid, 2002).

Interestingly, the way that Spielberg described his picture made it sound as if it would be an antiwar film much in the manner of the Vietnam films made by directors like Cimino, Coppola, Stone, and Kubrick. Yet, although he claimed that his combat epic would be unique, he not only used the tried-and-true formula of the small band of brothers bound together in common cause, he gave the picture a traditional, World War II-type ending, with the brave Captain Miller dying heroically at the hands of the Germans, *Private Ryan* being saved from the fate of his literal and symbolic brothers, and the cavalry—in the form of B-51 Mustangs—arriving just in the nick of time to save the day.

Terrence Malick’s *The Thin Red Line* followed *Saving Private Ryan* by only a few months in 1998. Set during the final days of the 1942 battle for Guadalcanal, the film was ostensibly an examination of the fragile psychological line that exists between sanity and insanity for soldiers in war. Malick’s film, though, proved to be overly long and almost surrealistically confused—oddly, it seemed to express neither a prowar nor an antiwar message. For its part, the Army stated flatly that the picture had no redeeming value whatsoever, portraying, as it did, soldiers as “mutineers, drunkards, and cowards.”

Jonathan Mostow’s *U-571*, released two years later, suffered from none of the narrative issues that plagued *The Thin Red Line*. Seeking to reintroduce latter-day audiences to the incredibly dangerous experience of World War II submarine warfare, Mostow wove together accounts of the 1941 capture by the British destroyer *Bulldog* of the extremely important Enigma decoder from the German U-110, and the 1944 American capture of the German U-505. In order to make the picture he wanted, however, Mostow involved himself in a most “egregious tampering with history,” turning the British destroyer into a U.S. submarine—the U-571 of the film’s title—so that it would look as if Americans had captured the Enigma decoder (Suid, 2002). Although British survivors of the real-life incident and members of Parliament protested loudly, the film was released with Americans as the heroes. Mostow agreed to provide a disclaimer at the end of the film explaining who the real heroes had been.

When Mostow was asked why he would make a World War II film just as the new millennium was dawning, he pointed out that while after Vietnam it had become “impolitic to make a movie that celebrated old-fashioned heroism in war,” now that the American people had worked through their tortured experiences of the conflict in Southeast Asia, they were once again ready to view images of war, especially those depicting World War II. Indeed, suggested Mostow, at this point people were “willing to feel proud and patriotic about the men who fought in that conflict.” World War II, after all, had been a “good war,” a “clear-cut case of good versus evil.” Mostow’s description in 2000 of World War II as a war that defined a “clear-cut case of good versus evil” is instructive, as it unwittingly links his new-millennium combat picture back to Ronald Reagan’s 1980s call for Americans to support Reagan’s attempts to lift the

United States back to the place of global prominence it had enjoyed before the nation had suffered through the ignominy of Vietnam (Suid, 2002).

Michael Bay would follow Mostow's *U-571* with his own "good versus evil" World War II combat picture, *Pearl Harbor*. Released in May 2001—just a few months after George W. Bush took office, and just a few months before the tragic events of 9/11—Bay's account of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor had little to do with what really happened on December 7, 1941; but it once again gave audiences a chance to cheer for American military heroes. Significantly, Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks followed the success of *Saving Private Ryan* with a highly regarded HBO miniseries, *Band of Brothers*, which was based on a book of the same name written by the well-known historian Stephen Ambrose. Ambrose had drawn the title for his book from the stirring St. Crispin's Day speech in Shakespeare's *Henry V*:

We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he to-day that sheds his blood with me,
Shall be my brother

Hanks, especially, had been intimately involved in pulling the project together, actually co-writing the screenplay for the series. Like *Saving Private Ryan* and so many other World War II films, the narrative focus of *Band of Brothers* was on a combat crew, the real-life "Easy Company" of the 101st Airborne Division of the United States Army. HBO mounted a massive advertising campaign for the series, and viewers anxiously awaited the opening episodes. Eerily, as it turns out, the series premiered on Sunday, September 9, 2001, just two days before 9/11. While the opening episodes drew some 10 million viewers, it would have seemed that audiences, horrified by the images of jetliners crashing into the towers of the World Trade Center, would have had little appetite for scenes of combat. Yet, even though it suspended its advertising campaign for the miniseries, HBO continued to air the remainder of the episodes on their original release dates—September 16 through November 4, 2001—drawing millions of viewers.

A number of combat pictures depicting the absurdity of war were made after *Saving Private Ryan* was released in 1998—the offbeat *Three Kings* in 1999 and the memoir-inspired *Jarhead* in 2005, both about the Gulf War, and Kathryn Bigelow's *The Hurt Locker* in 2009, about the war in Iraq. Generally, however, the combat pictures released after Spielberg's film came out in 1998, if not prowar, were at least pro patriotic heroism. Although not all were set during World War II—*Black Hawk Down* (2001), for instance, explored the events surrounding a disastrous U.S. mission in Somalia, while *We Were Soldiers* (2002) was a positive statement about American fighting men in Vietnam—all, including Clint Eastwood's companion pieces *Flags of Our Fathers* and *Letters from Iwo Jima* (both 2006), and another Spielberg/Hanks HBO project, *The Pacific* (2010), valorized military heroism, especially that exhibited by a courageous "band of brothers."

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—Philip C. DiMare

WESTERN, THE. Of all of the movie genres to which the twentieth century gave birth, the western is the most immediately recognizable and the most distinctively American form of cinema we possess today. Generally set in the post-Civil War era, and in territories west of the Mississippi, the western created its own landscape, its own character types, and its own narrative forms as a way of investing this time and place with mythic significance. And for those audiences who fell under its sway, the western became the epic tale of how Anglo-European settlers “tamed” the western frontier and its indigenous populations. And although its once immense appeal seems greatly diminished at present, its underlying mythos continues to resurface in a number of disparate (and seemingly unrelated) genres that the western appears to have spawned.

The history of this genre is practically coterminous with the development of narrative films as such. In 1903, a former Edison Studios cameraman, Edwin S. Porter, shot and directed a 12-minute film entitled *The Great Train Robbery*, demonstrating not only some of the most basic editing techniques of motion picture photography—such as panning, crosscutting, and double-exposure—but also the willingness of audiences to follow a simple linear narrative constructed around an already familiar literary subject, realistically depicted. In this case, the subject is (in the words of a contemporary movie ad) “a faithful duplication of the genuine ‘Hold Ups’ made famous by various outlaw bands in the far West.” In each of the 13 scenes that make up the film’s narrative, we follow the fortunes of a band of hapless train robbers who, after killing a trainman and a passenger, are pursued by a posse and finally shot dead. The final shot of the movie contains the most explosive image of the film, as the leader of the gang turns his six-shooter on the audience and fires directly into the camera, thereby drawing the viewer into a world of violent confrontation that, for decades afterward, became synonymous in moviegoers’ minds with the genre itself. Whether the “bad guy” lives or dies at the end of the film, or even whether the hero lives to enjoy the fruits of his victory, the western tells the story of how American society confronted evil on its frontier and created a new egalitarian society in the process.



Actors Clint Eastwood (left) and Lee Van Cleef star in the Sergio Leone western *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*, 1966. (Silver Screen Collection/Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

For more than two decades after Porter's landmark film, westerns continued to draw movie audiences in increasing numbers, and by the 1920s, hundreds of such films were being produced. Contemporary critics often referred to them as "horse operas," and their storylines and characters were generally formulaic. By the end of the decade, however, and not long after the advent of sound, one film achieved such preeminence that it was able to influence virtually every western made after it: Victor Fleming's *The Virginian* (1929). Based on an enormously popular novel and stage play of the same name by Owen Wister, *The Virginian* tells the story of a nameless cowboy who romances a schoolmarm, guns down a local rustler, and saves a town—all without compromising either his integrity or his romantic appeal. As played by the ever-laconic Gary Cooper, the Virginian is handsome, shy, and tall in the saddle, but more importantly, he is a man who can lynch an ex-saddle buddy who has thrown in his lot with the villains. Whatever his feelings might be, the western hero's sense of right and wrong seldom falters, and as a figure of both rectitude and courage he evokes memories of the knight-errant ideal of medieval romance literature.

By the 1930s, many of the silent-era stars had made the transition to sound—William Boyd (a.k.a. "Hopalong Cassidy") was one of the more successful cinematic transplants—and studios like Republic produced westerns in assembly-line fashion,

sometimes in as little as five days of shooting time. These B-westerns were mass-produced in the thousands, and were designed to be the second feature in a double bill. The emphasis in such films was on action, often giving as much attention to the hero's horse as to any human character, and naturally paying very little attention to either dialogue or character development. But in addition to these aesthetically deficient vehicles, Republic also produced more ambitious westerns, starring two of the most popular "singing cowboys" of the era: Gene Autry and Roy Rogers. Though the films they appeared in were scarcely more sophisticated than their B counterparts, Autry and Rogers enhanced the popularity of the genre by combining the appeal of country-western music with the melodramatics of the earlier "horse operas." In fact, musical routines became so important that the song duets of Roy Rogers and his wife Dale Evans often stopped the action of the movie cold, while the hero and heroine serenaded each other. It was not until the following decade, however, that the western evolved into a dramatic narrative with complex characters and a plot structure that involved more than a saloon fistfight, a posse's pursuit, and a climactic shootout between the movie's hero and any number of villainous adversaries.

For historians of this genre, the 1940s and 1950s represent the classic age of the western, and critical attention during this period tends to focus on the work of a relative few directors, and most especially the films of John Ford. By the time he made *Stagecoach* (1939), Ford had directed dozens of silent and talking films, many of them two- and three-reel westerns, but *Stagecoach* was a breakthrough film, both for Ford personally and for the industry. What Ford demonstrated convincingly was that a western could combine superior acting—thanks largely to his two principals, John Wayne and Claire Trevor—with a complex storyline and striking cinematography, without sacrificing those heightened action sequences that audiences had come to expect. More than that, however, in casting the relatively unknown Wayne in the iconic role of the Ringo Kid—as an outlaw whose code of ethics ironically sets him apart from, and above, the respectable passengers with whom he shares the titled stagecoach—Ford was crafting a mythic persona, a hero whose antecedents and personal failings are more than redeemed by courage and simple honesty. On Ford's imagined frontier there is no room for class-consciousness or the cruel and deceitful snobbery it engenders. Ford's idealized West is, at its best, a democracy of the brave and the just, and his fascination with (and emotional identification with) the U.S. Cavalry provides a convenient narrative through which to embody that ideal.

What follows over the next decade is a trio of films often referred to as Ford's "Cavalry trilogy"—*Fort Apache* (1948), *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* (1949), and *Rio Grande* (1950)—whose impact on the western is both profound and enduring. The first of these is arguably the best, bringing together many of the thematic elements that make Ford's mature westerns hard to ignore: the injustices visited upon the American Indian by an indifferent or corrupt federal government, the problematic nature of command, and the power of legend to eclipse reality. Set against Ford's beloved Monument Valley, Arizona/Utah—an emblematic landscape to which he returns again and again—*Fort Apache* tells the story of personal and moral conflict, with the threat of an Indian uprising looming in the background, as the two principals, Colonel Owen

Thursday (played with a finely calibrated hauteur by Henry Fonda) and Captain Kirby York (portrayed, naturally, by John Wayne) fall out over a question of diplomacy and Indian rights: York argues for negotiations with Cochise, the chief of the Chiricahua Apache, while Thursday insists on violently suppressing even the possibility of an armed revolt. Thursday's racist arrogance and his lust for glory lead him, and the men under his command, into a fatal ambush, an act that Ford clearly regards as equally irrational and irresponsible. Yet, years later, when Captain York (now Colonel York, in command of the fort) is asked by reporters to comment on Thursday's gallant charge, he discreetly sidesteps the question of Thursday's unfitness for command, and carefully preserves the legend of his bravery. Both of these attitudes—an ironic reverence for the fragile legends of the Old West and an anguished realization that the "taming" of the West was accomplished through acts of great injustice against an indigenous population—helped to shape a complex worldview that binds together most, if not all, of Ford's work in this genre. More than that, however, Ford's willingness to raise questions of personal integrity and racial injustice within the framework of an action-oriented movie established a precedent on which later directors were quick to seize.

The early 1950s saw the release of two films that, for many historians, epitomize the fullest dramatic expression of the western ideal of the embattled, heroic individual: Fred Zinnemann's *High Noon* (1952) and George Stevens's *Shane* (1953). Yet as different as these films are from one another, each captures in its own way some of the moral anxiety that becomes an increasingly prominent feature of the genre during this decade. This new tone and dramatic perspective are most obvious in *High Noon* where Will Kane (played by Gary Cooper), Hadleyville's longtime marshal, is about to retire, with a new bride in tow, when he discovers that a killer whom he had earlier captured and sent to the gallows has been inexplicably released from prison and is looking for revenge. Unable to rouse any support among the townspeople he had served for so long, and unwilling to run—though his new wife (played by Grace Kelly), a pacifist Quaker, demands that he renounce all thoughts of violence—Kane faces his would-be assassins alone, killing them all. The cowardice and deceitfulness of the townsfolk at first shocks Kane, and then disgusts him, and by film's end all he can do is take his lawman's badge and throw it on the ground. Unlike Ford's Wyatt Earp (in John Ford's *My Darling Clementine*, [1943]), Kane has neither the support of his family nor of society, and when he decides to make his stand against evil, he has only his sense of duty to turn to for self-vindication. As the mournful theme song of the movie suggests, he has been "forsaken" by everyone except his conscience.

In *Shane*, Stevens's buckskin-clad hero is even more of a loner: part drifter, part gunslinger, he tries to leave his morally problematic past behind him, only to discover that he cannot "break the mold." There is a fatalism here that threatens to undermine the heroic spirit of the narrative, and the almost-tragic sensibility of this film complicates our response to what one critic describes as the "airbrushed, mythologized" figure who occupies the moral center of this film. As played by Alan Ladd, Shane is the personification of the ideal American male: handsome, polite, generous, and determined to resist the aggression of others and to renounce the way of violence—or at least until his integrity and courage, and the survival of those he loves, are called into question,

and then he becomes an absolutely lethal killing machine, cleansing his world of tyranny and corruption. The fact that this conflict-drama is set against the reimagined backdrop of a very real struggle between ranchers and homesteaders in the Wyoming of the 1890s suggests that Stevens intended his audience to view Shane as a kind of collective historical persona, a symbolic representation of the national spirit in a time of war, when even men who would prefer to lead a quiet life are drawn into bloody conflict against their will. With the majestic Grand Tetons in the background, Shane drifts into and out of "civilization." He and his gun are necessary if the West is to be tamed, but once that transformation of the wilderness is accomplished, he has no further role to play in the society he has helped to create.

Commercially viewed, the period of mid-to-late 1950s witnessed a radical transformation of the movie-viewing audience, as the spread of TV technology made it possible, for the first time, for audiences to re-view an enormous backlog of old B-westerns in the privacy of their living rooms (albeit on a very small screen). *The Hopalong Cassidy Show*, for example, screened no fewer than 66 of William Boyd's movies, while the major networks were quick to capitalize on this market, creating TV westerns like *Gunsmoke* and *The Lone Ranger* that raised the genre to maximum visibility. By 1959, there were 26 western melodramas on TV, and the demand for these hour-long horse operas continued into the early 1960s, both in the United States and abroad. Of course, this type of media saturation of any genre finally produces a negative reaction among viewers who grow weary of too much tumbleweed, and by the later 1960s and early '70s the western's popularity had already begun a steep decline. Nevertheless, shows like *Bonanza* and *Gunsmoke* were sufficiently popular to remain on the air for 14 and 20 years, respectively.

During this same period, however, feature film westerns continued to be made, and some of the best exhibited changes in mood and social consciousness that had already begun to manifest themselves in films of the early 1950s. These "revisionist" westerns, as they are sometimes called, directed by such figures as Anthony Mann and Budd Boetticher, took the genre in new and aesthetically problematic directions, and even directors as revered as John Ford were inspired to reexamine many of the moral assumptions and narrative conventions that had defined the western up to this point. In Ford's *The Searchers* (1956), for example, John Wayne's Ethan Edwards is driven close to madness by the thought that his niece—captured earlier by a Comanche raiding party that killed her family—has been sexually defiled by the Indian Chief Scar, who has taken her as his wife. After five years of searching for her, Edwards's first impulse is to kill her rather than to allow her to live with her (or Edwards's?) shame, and it is only with the greatest reluctance that he returns her to her kin. The intensity of his racist emotions, his inability to forgive or forget or even to imagine a thought other than revenge, ultimately make Edwards the loneliest and most embittered character ever to appear in a western drama, and his story constitutes an astonishing admission by Ford that the western hero possesses a capacity for psychopathic behavior.

Similarly dark portraits emerge in films like Anthony Mann's *The Naked Spur* (1953), where Jimmy Stewart's vengeful rancher-turned-bounty hunter, Howard Kemp, pursues a dangerous outlaw—played with lethal charm by Robert Ryan—while

falling helplessly in love with said outlaw's "girl," Lina (Janet Leigh). Having been betrayed earlier by a fiancée who sold his ranch out from under him while he was in the army, Kemp struggles against his own nature when he finally realizes his feelings for Lina; driven by longing and distrust, and a desperate need for money, Stewart's character almost loses himself in moments of rage and despair. That Mann allows his hero/antihero to at last renounce his quest and accept the love of a woman who will be true to him may seem unacceptably sentimental to contemporary audiences, but it provides a powerful testimony to the abiding theme of self-redemption that gives the western genre a measure of psychological and moral depth to match its mythos of heroic isolation.

Sam Peckinpah's *Ride the High Country* (1962) and *The Wild Bunch* (1969) provide an appropriate historical frame for the westerns of the 1960s as much of the energy and audience appeal of this genre began to evaporate. Both of Peckinpah's films constitute an elegy to the art form and to the era it celebrated, as each offers an ironic retrospective view of past glories and present corruption. In *Ride the High Country*, Peckinpah shrewdly cast two celebrated western stars at the end of their careers—Randolph Scott and Joel McCrea—as two old friends who find themselves for the first time on opposite sides of the law, with McCrea guarding a gold shipment that Scott plans to steal. Following a story arc that becomes increasingly familiar during this decade and the next, *Ride the High Country* allows each of its principals to recover a measure of dignity, McCrea by dying to defend two young people who are beset by bad men, and Scott by finally placing friendship and loyalty above greed. But the movie as a whole is awash in a kind of cynicism that is both new and alien to this genre. *The Wild Bunch* is no less deconstructive of traditional western values as it traces the tragic spiral into death of a gang of over-the-hill outlaws whom the modern era (the film is set in 1912) has left behind. Their final and uber-violent act of redemption occurs when one of their bunch has been taken prisoner by a Mexican warlord who would rather slit the throat of his hostage than release him to his friends. In the blood-bath that forms the film's climax, the four remaining members of the gang die in one of the most spectacularly violent shootouts ever staged by a western director, and critics are still divided as to whether the "Wild Bunch" sacrifice themselves in a fit of vengeful nihilism or a moment of heroic redemption.

A remarkably similar mood of ironic distancing from the past manifests itself as well in films of this period whose approach to the western is less radically revisionist. Henry Hathaway's *True Grit* (1969), for example, features an embarrassingly overweight and frequently intoxicated John Wayne, playing a sometimes endearing, sometimes satiric parody of his familiar persona. In that same year, George Roy Hill's *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* combines elements of comedy, romance, and pathos in a story that clearly demonstrates the obsolescence of the Wild West outlaw and the deadly absurdity of his formerly romantic exploits. This tendency to debunk iconic western characters and the mystique surrounding them is even more obvious in "modern" westerns like John Huston's *The Misfits* (1960) and Martin Ritt's *Hud* (1963), where morally dysfunctional men—like Paul Newman's Hud and Clark Gable's washed-up ex-cowboy, Gay Langland—struggle with ghosts they cannot lay to rest and guilt they

cannot live with. By any standard, these protagonists are abject human failures, and the films they inhabit are regarded by many as either “anti-westerns” or examples of a genre that has become self-cannibalizing.

But as the western became increasingly a vehicle for cultural disenchantment in the United States, it acquired new vitality in Italy (and Europe generally) through the films of Sergio Leone, whose parody westerns pay oblique homage to the genius of John Ford while reintroducing to American audiences an actor who had earlier achieved considerable popularity in the TV western *Rawhide*, Clint Eastwood. As the Man with No Name, the laconic Eastwood piles up dead bodies like kindling in movies like *A Fistful of Dollars* (1964) and its two sequels (*For A Few Dollars More* [1965] and *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* [1966]) in what would be a spoof of the traditional western shoot-'em-up were it not for Eastwood's remarkable deadpan performance and the pervasive impression throughout Leone's “spaghetti” westerns that violence and sudden death are the commonplace realities of the American frontier. Interestingly, Eastwood managed to replicate this slightly unhistorical worldview in later films in which he either starred or directed—*Hang 'Em High* (1968) and *Joe Kidd* (1972) are examples—where the line between lawman and outlaw becomes blurry, and possibly irrelevant. During the later 1970s and '80s it was Eastwood who, almost singlehandedly, kept the western alive, and in innovative films like *Pale Rider* (1985) managed to create a film that was half-sequel and half-homage to Stevens's *Shane*.

Eastwood's ultimate contribution to the history of this genre, though, may well be his “farewell western,” *Unforgiven* (1992). His William Munny—ex-gunfighter and sometime born-again Christian—is quite possibly the most pathetic western antihero ever to mount a horse (which he cannot manage to do without falling off the first time he tries it), but there is nothing comic about him. Munny's descent into alcoholism and violence is motivated as much by desperation as weakness, and the general brutality of the world he returns to after years as an unsuccessful pig farmer reaches its unheroic climax in the killing of the sadistic sheriff of “Big Whiskey,” Little Bill (Gene Hackman), and his business partner, the town pimp. Just before he is killed, Little Bill pleads with Munny to spare his life, insisting that he does not deserve to die like this, to which Munny replies “Deserving's got nothing to do with it,” and indeed the entire film reflects that disheartening (and somewhat nihilistic) observation. Eastwood's final tale of the West is as devoid of justice as it is of beauty and courage, and *Unforgiven* is as much a requiem for the genre as an implied critique of the western “code” of honor, which cannot possibly survive in a world without values.

The western has been declared dead several times since the 1970s, and the financial and critical disaster of Michael Cimino's *Heaven's Gate* in 1980 was taken by many as a sign that the entire genre was suffering from aesthetic rigor mortis. Yet, in addition to Eastwood's *Unforgiven*, audiences also responded enthusiastically to Kevin Costner's *Dances with Wolves* (1990) and *Open Range* (2003), and the western has shown a remarkable talent for morphing into parallel genres, as in Don Siegel's *Dirty Harry* movies (starring Clint Eastwood, naturally) or Peter Hyams's sci-fi take on *High Noon* entitled *Outland* (1981). Obviously the frontier of the western imagination can be relocated to a contemporary urban setting or to a remote planet in some galaxy far

away. All that is needed for such a hybrid genre to survive is a sheriff with a gun and a town—or alien civilization—that needs taming.

See also: Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid; Ford, John; High Noon; Magnificent Seven, The; Searchers, The; Shane; Stagecoach; Wayne, John

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—Robert Platzner

WOMEN IN FILM. Images of women in American film have largely been driven by the star system. Beginning with Carl Laemmle's exploitation of Florence Lawrence in 1911, the star system was one of the ways the U.S. film industry organized its output and maximized profitability. Stars were commodities—tangible attractions that could be easily marketed through fan magazines and related publicity materials. The star system relied on audience identification for its success. In the case of women in film, female filmgoers identified with a particular female star, who then served as a powerful role model that defined socially accepted standards of behavior. Since mainstream films have tended to uphold dominant American cultural values, and a social order based on white, patriarchal capitalism, female star personas have been overwhelmingly white, heterosexual, and middle class.

Cinematic images of women in American films prior to World War I reveal a tension between two dominant feminine ideals: the Cult of True Womanhood and New Womanhood. Emerging from the culture of the Victorian period, the Cult of True Womanhood encouraged white, middle-class women to be pious, pure, domestic, and submissive. The two most prominent female stars of the decade, Mary Pickford and Lillian Gish, exemplified this concept of Victorian femininity, particularly in films directed by D. W. Griffith. The sexualized vamp character, famously portrayed by Theda Bara in *A Fool There Was* (1915), contrasted the virginal Victorian female archetype of the early cinema. Bara was one of the first studio-made stars; her movie studio's publicity department manufactured an exotic background and macabre personality to promote her films.

The virgin/vamp dichotomy is connected to widespread anxiety in the first decades of the twentieth century with regard to changing gender dynamics, particularly the



Alice Hyatt (Ellen Burstyn) works as a hash-house waitress with Diane Ladd (left) in a scene from the movie *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore*, which was released on May 30, 1975. (Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images)

appearance of the slimmer, more athletic New Woman of the Progressive era. New Womanhood challenged the Victorian ideology of separate spheres, which had confined women to the domestic realm. With rapid industrialization and urbanization, an increasing number of young, single women engaged in wage labor and enjoyed a variety of affordable urban amusements in such hetero-social venues as motion picture theaters, dance halls, and amusement parks. Meanwhile, more middle-class women attended colleges and universities and then subsequently entered female-dominated professions. Married middle- to upper-class women also carved a space in the public sphere through their leadership in various reform causes, most notably the suffrage movement.

The New Woman played an active role within the evolving film industry of the 1910s, which offered white women novel opportunities in front of and behind the camera. The daring serial queens in *The Perils of Pauline* (1914) starring Pearl White or *The Hazards of Helen* (1914–1917) starring Helen Holmes challenged conventional notions of proper feminine behavior. Slapstick comediennes such as Mabel Normand and Marie Dressler also challenged traditional gender roles by purposefully violating the bounds of refined middle-class behavior. Meanwhile, scenarists Anita Loos and Frances Marion were two of the most successful writers in the industry, while Lois Weber and Dorothy Arzner directed pictures. The French-born Alice Guy-Blaché was the first female studio executive and co-founder of the Solax Company in 1910.

Moreover, before the film industry consolidated into the studio system, such actresses as Nell Shipman, Clara Kimball Young, and Gene Gauntier used their star power as leverage to establish independent production companies. In 1919, "Little Mary" Pickford, along with Douglas Fairbanks Sr., Charlie Chaplin, and D. W. Griffith, formed United Artists, a distribution company that would enable them to fully exploit and market their own feature films.

The New Woman gave way to the emancipated flapper figure after World War I. Flappers embraced a modern appearance and consumerist lifestyle that further challenged the rigid norms of respectability and behavior of the Victorian cultural consensus. During the 1920s, Hollywood released a series of films featuring actresses such as Colleen Moore, Louise Brooks, and Joan Crawford as flappers. Above all, Clara Bow in *It* (1927) presented an illusionary vision of independence, freedom, and modernity for young American women. However, although she appeared more sexually precocious, the social expectation was that flappers would eventually marry and assume their traditional function as wives and mothers.

During the early 1930s, the prominence of glamorous women on the silver screen contrasted the harsh realities of the Great Depression. Many of these actresses portrayed bold and independent female protagonists. For example, Jean Harlow and Mae West titillated audiences, while Norma Shearer, Greta Garbo, and Marlene Dietrich specialized in strong female characters. The establishment of the Production Code Administration in 1934, which was Hollywood's system of self-censorship, limited the forthright sexuality of these female stars. Still, this did not mean the disappearance of assertive women, as seen in the dominance of such stars as Bette Davis, Barbara Stanwyck, Katharine Hepburn, Rosalind Russell, and Joan Crawford. Hollywood films frequently featured these stars in a variety of roles ranging from independent heiresses to competent career women, particularly journalists. Nevertheless, storylines continued to focus on the importance of heterosexual romance, and positioned marriage and children as the ultimate goal.

White, Anglo-American female stars dominated the box office throughout much of the Classical Hollywood period, though this did not necessarily translate into more power for women in the film industry. Due to the studio system's standard practice of lengthy, fixed-term contracts, stars had little choice in their roles. Nevertheless, the woman's picture, a category of films largely produced and directed by men but centered on a female protagonist, maintained an elevated status in Hollywood as studio executives assumed that the majority of audiences were female. Women's pictures focused on romance, courtship, and motherhood, and featured long-suffering and self-sacrificing women forced to make difficult choices while maintaining their dignity. Such films may have been intended to teach American female audiences lessons about their proper function in a patriarchal society. Conversely, many of these female-centered melodramas subverted the patriarchal norm by exploring the breakdown of marital relations.

In the meantime, Hollywood relegated African American, Native American, Asian American, and Latina actresses to supporting roles. Cinematic representations of women of color in early film and throughout the Classical Hollywood period tended

to fall into a narrow range of images. In its depictions of African Americans, early Hollywood reproduced several stock characters from the minstrel shows. While African American men overwhelmingly appeared as buffoonlike coons, submissive Uncle Toms, or hypersexualized black bucks, African American women routinely figured as mammies—nurturing, asexual, and rotund caregivers. Hattie McDaniel exemplified the mammy stereotype in *Gone with the Wind* (1939), an Oscar-winning role that forever typecast the actress as a deferential servant at a time when much of U.S. society was segregated.

Conversely, Native American women did not appear on-screen as servants. Early films often romanticized such characters as Indian princesses. At the same time, westerns also depicted Native women as “squaws”—savage and untrustworthy. This tension is connected to the myth of the frontier; as the United States industrialized, urbanized, and modernized in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Anglo-Americans celebrated the conquest of the Wild West and its “savage” peoples while at the same time lamenting its demise. Although there are exceptions, most notably *Ramona* (1910, 1928, 1936), Hollywood films depicted mixed-race women, whether they were *mestiza*, *métis*, or mulatto, as duplicitous and sexually aggressive. Frequently, she appeared to be a tragic character punished for the transgressions of her parents. This is evident in a range of films, from Griffith’s *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) to King Vidor’s *Duel in the Sun* (1946).

Films stereotyped Asian American women as either exotic beauties or dragon ladies. The Chinese American actress Anna May Wong specialized in the latter stereotype, which in many ways resembled Theda Bara’s vamp character. The characterization of Asian American women as dragon ladies was part of a broader current of anti-Asian sentiment in dominant American culture and society. White communities, particularly on the West Coast, referred to Chinese and Japanese immigrants as the Yellow Peril. Beyond racial prejudice, this belief emerged from the perception that since Asian immigrants worked for lower wages, they posed an economic threat in a tight labor market.

The two major stock characters for Latinas, particularly those of Mexican origin, were the cantina girl or the señorita. Cantina girls tended to be dark-skinned, tempestuous, and more sexually aggressive than white, Anglo-Saxon female characters. By contrast, señoritas were typically lighter-skinned, chaste, and willing to sacrifice themselves for the good of the white Anglo-American protagonist. During the Classical Hollywood period, the Mexican American actresses Lupe Velez and Dolores Del Rio rose to prominence as leading ladies, particularly in conjunction with the Good Neighbor Policy. Beginning in 1933 and through the World War II years, FDR’s Administration set aside the more traditional policies of imperialist interventionism and bolstered relations with Latin America. The Brazilian singer and actress Carmen Miranda also enjoyed a brief period of popularity in Hollywood at this time by starring in a string of Latin-themed musicals.

With the U.S. entry into World War II, Hollywood films emphasized the need for women to make sacrifices for the good of the nation. Home-front melodramas, such as *Since You Went Away* (1944) and *Tender Comrade* (1943), were designed to inspire patriotism by featuring women as courageous patriots performing essential duties to

mobilize for victory. Prior to World War II, middle-class wives and mothers rarely worked outside the home, but the draft created an unprecedented demand for labor and created novel opportunities for women in the workforce. Still, it was made clear to women that they were entering the labor force to serve a temporary need at a time of national crisis. Women were encouraged to be strong yet feminine, and expected to maintain their domestic duties. Traditional ideas about family, domesticity, and a woman's place in American society thus did not disappear. The fresh-faced Betty Grable, the star of a series of Technicolor musicals, was the top female box-office draw of the decade and was popular with both women and men, particularly homesick GIs. Twentieth Century-Fox distributed millions of pinups of Grable to American servicemen. Grable epitomized the wholesome girl-next-door who was nonetheless a sex symbol.

As World War II ended, Hollywood films increasingly reaffirmed the patriarchal consensus. For example, in *Mildred Pierce* (1945), the entrepreneurial, strong, and independent-minded Mildred, portrayed by Joan Crawford, is punished for seemingly abdicating her motherly duties. Postwar films increasingly coded women who were not devoted wives and nurturing mothers as dangerous. The so-called femme fatale character manipulated men in order to gain power and money. In the end, however, she typically succeeded in destroying not only herself, but the lives of those around her. Some examples include Barbara Stanwyck in *Double Indemnity* (1944), Jane Greer in *Out of the Past* (1947), Lana Turner in *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1946), and Rita Hayworth in *The Lady from Shanghai* (1947). Later dubbed films noirs by critics, pictures such as these are distinctive due to their gritty and cynical take on American culture, as well as their dark visual style.

By the 1950s, a new generation of voluptuous screen beauties, including Elizabeth Taylor, Ava Gardner, Jane Russell, and Marilyn Monroe, dominated motion pictures. Films of the period seemed to give women a choice between being a domestic goddess or a sex goddess, and left little room for independent or career-oriented women. Hyperconsumerism, home-based leisure, and suburbanization intensified the culture of domesticity and reinforced traditional gender roles. The emphasis on family life strengthened popular prejudices against white, middle-class women in paid employment. Domestic melodramas such as *All That Heaven Allows* (1955), starring Jane Wyman, both challenged and upheld traditional gender roles and the culture of conformity. Moreover, on the eve of the feminist movement, Doris Day portrayed spunky single career women who nonetheless sought heterosexual romance.

By the early 1960s, many women had become active in their demands for liberation and equality. In 1963, Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique*, a book that examined the ways in which suburban wives and mothers have been disempowered and repressed. Friedan chronicled their feelings of unhappiness, isolation, and frustration, thus giving voice to an already existing feminist movement. Three years later, Friedan joined with other feminists to create the National Organization for Women (NOW). The organization denounced the exclusion of women from professional and political life, and decried legal and economic discrimination. Moreover, a woman's right to sexual pleasure was becoming more accepted and facilitated through the awareness of birth control and the availability of the Pill.

In mainstream American films, the sexual liberation aspects of the women's movement tended to take precedence over the political agenda. Following a 1952 Supreme Court decision, which secured First Amendment protection for films and resulted in the gradual decline of motion picture censorship, Hollywood adopted an increasingly brazen approach to sex and sexuality. While such stars as Doris Day, Janet Leigh, and Natalie Wood dominated the early part of the decade, Jane Fonda and Faye Dunaway emerged as the major female stars of the New Hollywood period as their star personas aligned with the countercultural values of the 1960s. Both actresses would go on to portray strong, independent, and unmarried female professionals in a number of films in the 1970s, such as *The China Syndrome* (1979) and *Network* (1976).

By the early 1970s, a group of younger and more radical feminists changed the direction of the women's movement as a whole. The ideology behind what became known as second-wave feminism was rooted in the idea that women's oppression was due to the institution of marriage, which confined women to the domestic sphere. Feminists argued that the dominance of certain cultural assumptions about women excluded middle-class white women from the workplace and restricted working-class and nonwhite women to a narrow range of employment opportunities. NOW campaigned for Congressional ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). Initially proposed in 1923, the ERA would have made all forms of discrimination based on gender illegal. Some mainstream films flirted with second-wave feminism by featuring liberated female characters, but ultimately avoided the more radical politics of the movement. For example, Martin Scorsese's *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* (1974) and Paul Mazursky's *An Unmarried Woman* (1978) each centered on female protagonists and their processes of self-discovery and growing independence. Other films, such as *Diary of a Mad Housewife* (1970) and *A Woman under the Influence* (1974), explored the themes of subordination, repression, drudgery, and neglect in the lives of suburban housewives.

Hollywood continued to offer strong roles for female stars into the late 1970s and early 1980s. Sally Field played plucky, sympathetic blue-collar or rural heroines in *Norma Rae* (1979) and *Places in the Heart* (1984), while Meryl Streep played an emancipated divorcée in *Kramer vs. Kramer* (1979), a single mother and union activist in *Silkwood* (1983), and a Polish holocaust survivor in *Sophie's Choice* (1982). Moreover, Goldie Hawn fused comedy with feminism in *Private Benjamin* (1980) and *Swing Shift* (1984). Another feminist comedy was *Nine to Five* (1980), starring Lily Tomlin, Dolly Parton, and Jane Fonda, whose production company produced the film.

The influence of former screen star President Ronald Reagan meant that Hollywood's fascination with liberated women was short-lived. Mainstream films of the 1980s projected many of the issues of the Reagan Revolution, namely family values, patriotism, militarism, and unfettered capitalism. The rise of neoconservatism meant a backlash against the social, political, sexual, and cultural movements of the 1960s and 1970s that had challenged traditional roles and ideas. The women's movement suffered a tremendous blow when the ERA ultimately failed in 1982—only 35 of the 38 states required to ratify passed the measure.

Reagan had called for a return to family values, which meant a nuclear family with the father as the undisputed head of the household. Films that featured women in the workplace, such as *Baby Boom* (1987) and *Working Girl* (1988), tended to reinforce patriarchal attitudes. The message was that it was nearly impossible to juggle both a family and a career, or that women could only be truly fulfilled as wives and mothers. As a part of this reactionary return to family values, the femme fatale archetype reemerged. Neo-noir films such as *Fatal Attraction* (1987) positioned single, independent career women as a threat to the traditional nuclear family. Slasher films were also popular during the decade. Typically, such films featured the slaughter of teenage girls at the hands of a male serial killer. However, the heroine or “final girl” emerges as the lone survivor due to her strength and resourcefulness—for example, Jamie Lee Curtis in the *Halloween* series.

Other mainstream films of the 1980s and into the 1990s focused on female strength through female bonding. The chick flick, an updated version of the woman’s picture of the Classical Hollywood period, emerged as a category of films intended for female audiences. These films ranged from such sentimental tearjerkers as *Steel Magnolias* (1989) to the more aggressive *Thelma and Louise* (1991). Contemporary mainstream films about female bonding typically downplayed lesbian relationships. Both *The Color Purple* (1985) and *Fried Green Tomatoes* (1991), for example, were based on novels in which female friendship formed the basis for love and sexual interactions, which their film adaptations either ignored or made ambiguous.

Though parity remains elusive, Hollywood offered more opportunities for women of color. Following World War II, a number of social problem films appeared dealing with racism and prejudice in U.S. society, such as *Pinky* (1949). However, with the rise of the modern civil rights movement in the 1950s, the U.S. film industry adopted a cautious approach. Dorothy Dandridge emerged as the first African American leading lady in this period, yet she was cast in a limited range of roles. As the civil rights movement radicalized in the 1960s and 1970s, a cycle of blaxploitation films appeared that popularized elements of the Black Power movement. Some of these films featured African American women as protagonists, such as Pam Grier in *Coffy* (1973) and *Foxy Brown* (1974). While significant gains have been more recently made for African American female actresses, most notably Halle Berry, leading roles for Asian American and Native American actresses are virtually nonexistent. By contrast, Latina actresses such as Jennifer Lopez, Jessica Alba, Salma Hayek, and Penelope Cruz have risen to film stardom in recent decades.

Over the past two decades, there has also been an increase in the number of female leads appearing in such male-dominated Hollywood genres as action-adventure, science fiction, comic/video-game adaptations, and martial arts. These films attempt to combine “girl power” with sex appeal to make them appealing to heterosexual male audiences as well as to women. For example, Sigourney Weaver in the *Alien* films and Linda Hamilton of the *Terminator* series portrayed macho female protagonists, while more recently Angelina Jolie, Uma Thurman, and Milla Jovovich have played tough action heroines. Another recent trend in women’s films and American society is the reconciliation between feminism and femininity. Third-wave feminism emerged

in the early 1990s among younger women who reclaimed feminism but in less overtly political ways than the second-wave feminists of the 1960s and 1970s. In particular, the mass media and commodity culture functioned as important sites for empowerment and identity for “girls.” Some chick flicks that exhibit third-wave or postfeminist sensibilities include *Clueless* (1995), *Legally Blonde* (2001), and the *Scream* trilogy (1996, 1997, and 2000).

Most women-centric films have been produced and directed by men, and thus exhibit a male-centered image of femininity. Nevertheless, there has been an increase in the number of female filmmakers in Hollywood, including Kathryn Bigelow, Nora Ephron, Amy Heckerling, Mimi Leder, Nancy Meyers, Penny Marshall, and Barbra Streisand. The independent film movement has also afforded opportunities for directors such as Niki Caro, Sofia Coppola, Mira Nair, and Kimberly Peirce. Additionally, there has been a moderate increase in the number of female film executives, as seen in the careers of Sherry Lansing, Nina Jacobson, and Gail Berman. Although women in the American film industry have made quite a few advancements, it is by no means an equal playing field. Women are still underrepresented in the film industry, which overwhelmingly relies on the blockbuster formula and its target audience of young males. Perhaps the recent box-office successes of such women-centered films as *The Devil Wears Prada* (2006), *Julie & Julia* (2009), and *Sex and the City* (2008), as well as *New Moon* (2009) and *Twilight* (2008), indicate a paradigm shift for women in film in American society.

See also: Male Gaze, The; Feminist Film Criticism

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—Dominique Brégent-Heald

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